

SIDDIS OF JANJIRA AND THE PORTUGUESE

Ph.D. Thesis

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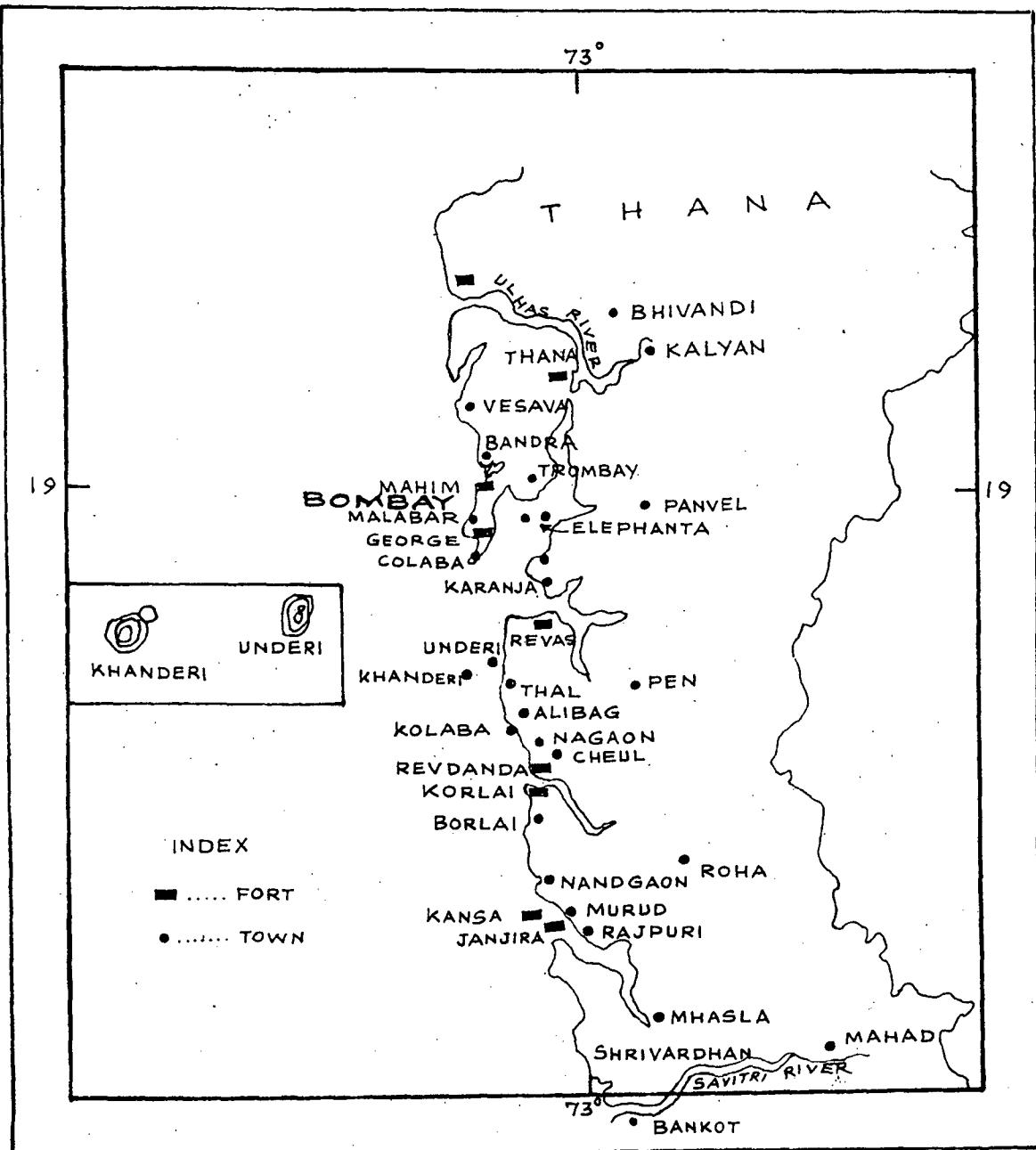
	<u>Pages</u>
Acknowledgement	IV-V
Chapter I - Introduction	1-16
Chapter II - Siddis' settlements in India and their rise from Slavery to Royalty	17-59
Chapter III - Siddis versus Marathas with special reference to the Mughals' and the Portuguese diplomacy	60-101
Chapter IV - Marathas versus Siddis and the Portuguese	102-165
Chapter V - The victorious campaigns of the Marathas against the Siddis and the Portuguese	166-224
Chapter VI - Siddi-Maratha ties vis-a-vis Portuguese and the British	225-299
Chapter VII - Later Siddis	300-322
Chapter VIII - Conclusion	323-350
Appendix A - Portuguese documents with English Summaries	351-365
Appendix B - Glossary	366-370
Bibliography	371-388

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The fortified island of Janjira, which is the focal point of our analysis, located between Kolaba and Ratnagiri in Western Maharashtra in $17^{\circ} 59'$ and $18^{\circ} 32'N$ latitude and $72^{\circ} 57'$ and $73^{\circ} 21'E$ longitude, is about 70 Kms south of Bombay. Almost the whole area is overlaid by hill ranges which run somewhat parallel to the arms of the sea¹. Janjira is situated in Konkan which includes the areas between the Western Ghats and the Indian Ocean, from Daman on the north to that of Terekhol on the Goa frontier, on the south. The entire Konkan tract, which measures about 512 kilometres in length and a breadth varying from 48 to 96 kilometres is divided into the districts of old Thana, Kolaba and Ratnagiri, and the former principalities of Janjira and Sawantwadi. Konkan with its protracted coastline, convenient harbours and comparative closeness to the Arabian coast drew the attention of the earliest travellers². The descendants of immigrant Jews, Parsis, Abyssinians and Arabs still found there in large numbers further speak greatly about its historicity. The modern Konkan is divided into north and south Konkan, meaning the parts north and south of Bombay.

Viewed from the sea-side, the coast appears to be a continuous row of hills. Curiously, imposing rocks emerge all of a sudden from the swelling sea and at times misty sandy beaches become visible between the very high boulders and the vast ocean. The rocky embankment is very often dotted by estuaries and creeks, and the small islets in the



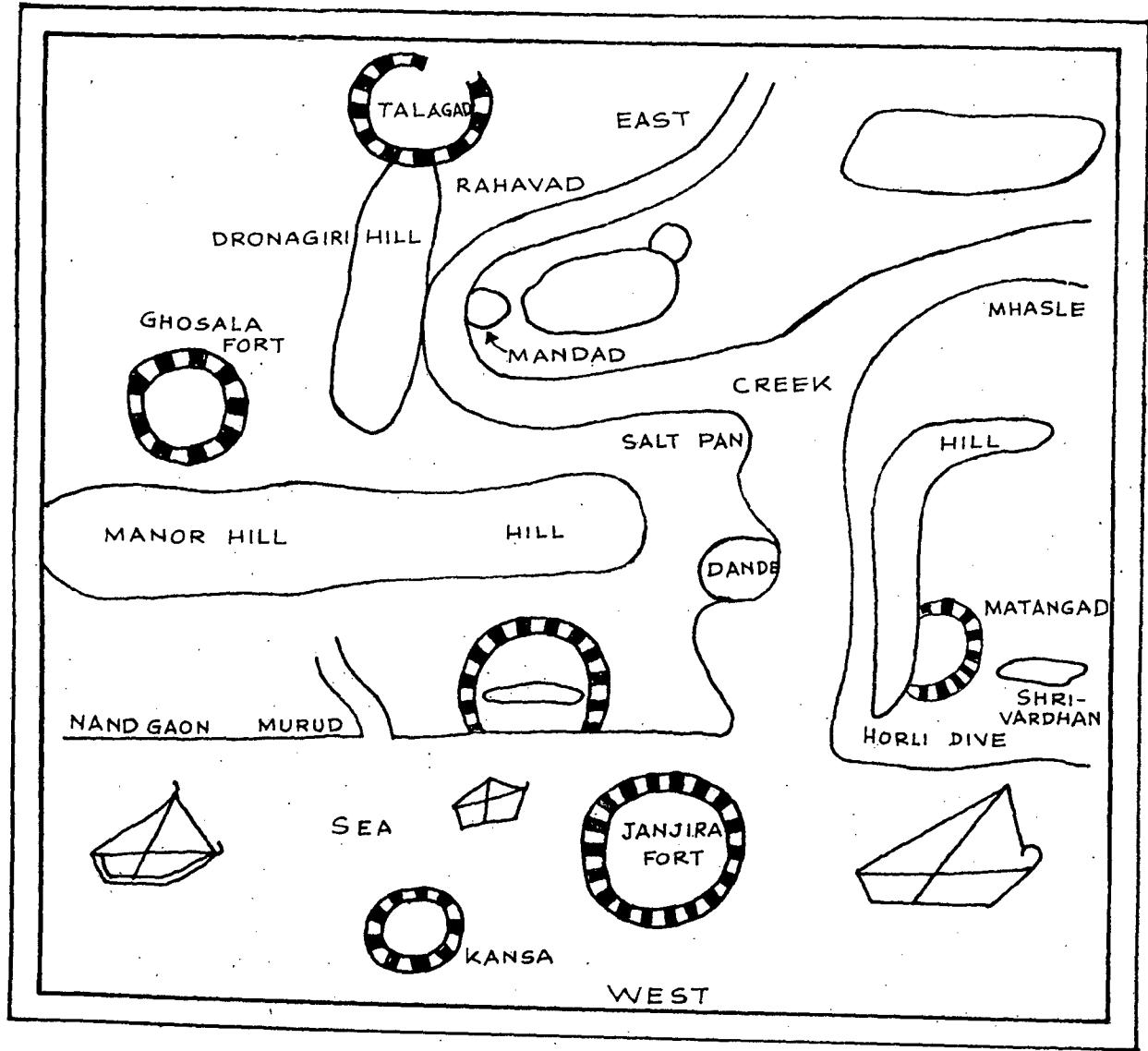
Western coast of India

vicinity provide a scope for fortification. The islands of Khanderi and Underi are situated 19 kms south of Bombay. Eleven kms. to the south lies Alibag at the mouth of a tidal creek. Further down the south, is Roha creek where River Kundalika runs into the Arabian sea. On the right shore of Kundalika is Chaul, a famous harbour since ancient times. The Roha creek once happened to be the northern limit of Habsan, the land of Habshis or Abyssinian rulers. Their state was partitioned into two disproportionate parts by the gulf and creek of Rajpuri. The creek juts deep into the interior land and at its very entrance the well fortified island of Janjira is situated. The creeks and estuaries with defensive works increase as one travels further down the south along the coast of present Ratnagiri. On the south bank of the estuary of River Savitri lies Bankot known formerly as Fort Victoria.

Next, one comes across the famous fortification of Suvarndurg in front of a small bay, Dabhol, the ancient port on the northern and Anjanvel on the southern shore of River Vashishthi, Jaygadh on a creek created by River Shastri, Ratnagiri on River Bhatiya, Purangadh at the head of Muchukundi river and Jaytapur at the entrance of Rajapur river. Nearly 372 kms. from Bombay, where the Nagothna river falls into the sea lies Vijaydurg or invincible Gheria or Griem as distorted by the Portuguese. Devgad harbour however had not attained as much importance as Malvan or Sindhudurg. Another significant port is Vengurla where the Dutch had succeeded in establishing their trading centre.

It is important at the outset to emphasize that the entire Konkan coast tinged with ports, harbours, bays, gulfs, estuaries and creeks has played in its own way a vital role in the history of India. Geographically, the coastal regions of the State of Maharashtra are separated from the Deccan plateau by a mountain range with an access only through a few narrow passes. The coastal districts are lengthy as against their breadth not going beyond 96 kms. and at times limited to only 48 kms. However, the land in the vicinity of the sea is quite productive. But a vast area is full of laterite and basalt rocks. The forest areas of Kolaba, Ratnagiri, Janjira and Sawantwadi produced a good deal of timber. Teak trees are widespread all over Kolaba and it is found in abundance in the Habsan hills³.

Significantly, the rivulets and streams in Konkan run down the hills only for a few kilometres before they enter into the Arabian sea. They retain the running water as long as the rainy season lasts and get dried up as soon as the monsoon retreats. The land being scattered with hills and hillocks, the soil is not so productive. Yet it is good for cultivation of paddy in flat zones. During medieval times, pepper was grown in some localities of Rajapur and adjoining areas. The mountain regions are largely overlaid by rich vegetation cover which continues to endow Konkan with a unique scenic beauty and horticultural wealth⁴. The Konkan region gets very heavy rainfall and the climate there is moist with a very high relative humidity. While the coastal belt south of Bombay is dotted with hills and navigable rivers, the coast north of Bombay besides being sandy is low



Location of Janjira fort

also. On account of the nature of the soil, many areas therefore are unproductive. Yet some other parts of the area are full of trees. Either date or palmyra tree is not seen in North as well as South Konkan but the coconut trees grow in abundance along the sandy parts of the coast and the banks of the creeks north of Bombay⁵.

The fort of Janjira which lies on the island at the entrance of the Rajpuri creek, is little less than a kilometre away from the mainland on the east. Its distance from the mainland on the western side is about one and half kilometre. The area of Janjira is confined on the north by the Kundalika or Roha creek in Kolaba, on the east by the Roha and Mangaon taluka, on the south by the Bankot creek and on the west by the Arabian sea. Around half the coast line, 64 kms. long Rajpuri gulf splits Janjira into two main parts ---- northern and southern⁶.

In fact, the word Janjira is derived from the corrupted version of the word in Marathi of the Arabic 'Jajirah' which means 'an island'. This terminology is quite misleading because now the entire area is called Janjira. What adds more to the confusion is that even the fortress of Danda-Rajpuri, 6 kms. from Murud is also known today as Janjira. While Ptolemy called this place an island, Pliny identified as a river and a port, and the author of Periplus simply as a place on the continent. Janjira also came to be called Habshan or Habsan meaning Abyssinian or African or 'Negro in Hindustani'⁷. Actually, the term Janjira had, during

historical times, came to be known as the great maritime depot of Danda-Rajpuri in the middle of which lies the fortified rocky island of Janjira⁸.

Though mention of Janjira by Strabo, Pliny and some other ancient writers of the 1st-2nd century A.D. has been doubted by many scholars⁹, it is quite logical to identify the word 'sigerdis' or 'zizerus' with Janjira because the word 'zizera' appears to be a vestige of the old Arab trade with India before the Christian era¹⁰. Moreover, it is to be remembered that the island of Zanzibar off the coast of East Africa is said to have been termed so, it being a fortified island before under the Moorish rulers¹¹. Known today as Murud-Janjira, the port seems to be very old. The fort of Janjira, viewed in the light of historical perspective will emerge as one of the oldest sea-forts of India. It is in the Mangalashtaka that one finds mention of Ballalo-Murudeshwar or Ballalam-Murudun Vinayak. Murud is derived from the Sanskrit word Mrud meaning Shiva. Mrudi is nothing but Parvati and Mrudanipati is obviously Shiva. Today the said Ballal (Ganapati) is not located in Murud but it is in Pali, and at the original site of Ganapati, there is a Dargah¹².

Tracing the course of development of this island-fort, it is observed that Murud-Janjira came under Kanishka at the end of 1st century A.D. Gautami's son, Satkarni, occupied this area around 124-25 A.D. as is evident from the inscription discovered in the cave of Naneghat near

Junnar. Subsequently, the area came under the sway of the Mauryas in 600 A.D. and was under Pulkeshin from 600-640 A.D. From 920 A.D., Silaharas ruled over it. When Chalukyas were defeated in 1020 A.D., it fell in the hands of the Yadavas of Devguiri. There still appear three layers of the construction works between the walls of the fort and its bastions. The earliest construction of the base of Janjira may be assigned to the year 124-125 A.D. when Satkarni made it his seat of power. The description of early travellers further strengthen this view. The Yadavas maintained whatever portion of the base that was still existing then and raised a new fort (Durg) over there. During the occupation of Devguiri by Muhammad Tughluk, the place seems to have remained under the local chief, for a Medhekot, meaning wooden fort, is said to have been built in 1415 A.D. by a Koli King. It was due to a trick played by the Abyssinians that he lost the fort to them in 1490 A.D. The Abyssinians subsequently constructed a strong stone fort over there during 1567-1571 A.D.¹³. Further light on the construction of this fort is possible only through the excavations of the base and new marine research establishment like that of the unit based in the National Institute of Oceanography, Goa, may solve the mystery of its ancient history, antiquity and the earliest masters.

Confronted with such challenges, it is worth-while to have a closer look at Janjira's physical strength. The fort of Janjira is based on an odd-shaped rock. On account of its oval shape resembling a crescent moon, it was popularly

known as Janjira Mehrub. Its principal gate with large entrance leading towards the sea looks on Rajpuri on the sea coast. It has a small gate behind which faces vast expanse of the sea and was often used in times of need and emergency.

It leads to a broad semi-circular masonry platform of about 20 feet height extending along the sea front and is defended by bastions on every 30 metres. The parapet structure of the wall is well cut. The bastions numbering 19 measure approximately about 26 metres across and about 10 metres deep. The walls are battlemented, strongly loopholed, and have their faces covered by the bastions¹⁴. True to Islamic style, its large gate faces east towards Mecca. Its total circumference comes to 2.5 kms. approximately. In 1669, there were 572 cannons. Inside the fortification at the highest point (70 metres) was a strong hill fort. There were 3 big cannons namely --- Kallal Bangdi, Chavri and Landa Kassau. Besides, it had a well for drinking water. The excavations carried out in 1985 revealed the Garbhagrah (Sanctum Sanctorum) of a Shiva temple, Shivalinga, Pindi, one Ram Panchayatan temple and old pillars¹⁵. In the 19th century, there were in the bastions and on the walls ten guns --- three indigenous and seven of European make. Of the three guns of local make, one was Kallal Bangdi with eight large rings attached to either side. Eighteen feet long with a circumference of seven feet eight inches at the muzzle and a bore of fourteen inches diameter, it might have been brought by Shivaji's army probably and abandoned on the retreat. Out of the seven European guns, while three were manufactured in Sweden, one in Spain, one in Holland, one in France and the seventh had no identity mark to trace its origin.

The three Swedish brass guns fixed on three different towers, were sophisticated and of equal size and shape. They were often feet length with a breech three feet in circumference and a bore of four inches in diameter with letters C.R.S. inscribed on them and below them the Royal Arms of Sweden with the year reading, 'Anno 1665' meaning 'Year 1665'. Round the breech was a powder pan resting on entwined snakes. The Spanish brass gun was ten feet three inches long with a bore of five inches in diameter bearing the word 'Dom Phillippe III Rey D 'Espanha' with golden fleece below, and the Spanish arms. The Dutch (brass) gun was seven feet five inches long with a bore of four inches in diameter. Round the breech was engraved 'Hans Woorden ET Ian Albera de Grave Amsterdam', with the date 1672. The French brass gun was nine feet long with $6\frac{1}{4}$ inches bore and had a royal coat of arms surmounted by a heraldic fleur-de-lis. However, it had neither date nor name. The seventh gun also of brass measured twelve feet ten inches long with six inches bore. Except two fishes engraved on the muzzle, the gun had no mark. In addition, there were two brass mortars and a four-barrelled brass gun measuring $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet in length. Over the walls and inside the fort were scattered 121 pieces of cannon of various calibre, both serviceable and unserviceable. Also, there was a sword four feet long and one foot broad.

Just above the huge entrance, near the heavy iron studded gate, was a large stone inscription fixed into the walls, with the letters 'Yohor 1111 H' (A.D. 1694). This

indicated the beginning of the construction of the walls which were completed in 1707 A.D. by Siddi Surul Khan (1707-1737). Entering the gateway, there are the ruins of a large edifice reportedly built during the period of Siddi Surul Khan. The windows had ornamental stone carving in the Saracenic style. Further on the right side, there was a large cistern, around which stood the Nawab's palace and women's quarters. The palace was a small upper storeyed stucco building in the ordinary Hindu-European style. On the highest point (200 feet above sea level) was the magazine supported by several old type guns. In 1860, more than half the interior of the Janjira fort was burnt in a fire which destroyed the bulk of state papers and documents thereby denying to the posterity the vital information about the history of Siddis. The fire, however, did not damage the walls, and some houses which were burnt were reconstructed or partially restored¹⁶.

On the left bastion of the entrance of the fort a face of tiger has been engraved. It is believed that Burhan Nizamshah had ordered the carving. The tiger holds in his four claws four elephants --- one elephant is in the mouth, the second is entrapped in tail¹⁷. Perhaps that stratagem was a symbolic warning to the ambitious enemies. Today, the stone steps leading to the gate of this sea-fort are worn out and neglected but flagstones, awful mansions and cracked slabs, deteriorating balustrades, dilapidated old corridors, halls and courts where once soldiers moved still remind one of its glorious past¹⁸.

DANDA-RAJPURI

Rajpuri town is situated, over half kilometre east of Janjira fort, on the mainland, and over three kilometres south-east of Rajpuri is the fort of Danda located on the shore of the creek. During the rule of Siddis, the passage from Rajpuri to the castle was defended by artillery thereby making the entry of any intruder almost impossible. These two --- the town and the fortress -- are considered as one place, Danda-Rajpuri, and it in fact formed the administrative head-quarters of the land possessions of the Siddis¹⁹.

Thus Danda-Rajpuri was a well guarded port shielded by the fort of Janjira. According to Jervis, during 13th and 14th centuries, "Rajpuri was the head-quarter of one of the districts of north Konkan under the Yadava kings of Devguri (1250-1318)"²⁰.

Two centuries later, Afonso de Albuquerque, the first Portuguese Governor in Goa, in a letter dated 1st January 1514 addressed to the King of Portugal described Danda thus: "... a good place and the chief port for the Caracks all to come to it, and has a very small island on which the moors have a very beautiful fortress, very full of trees and many tanks of water It seems me, sir, that we ought to take it"²¹.

The location and importance of Danda-Rajpuri could not escape the notice of Khafi Khan, the Mughal historian. He states: "Danda-Rajpuri is situated half in the sea and half on the land. About a cannon-shot distant from Danda-Rajpuri was Janjira in the sea, so that if the Governor of the country was hard pressed by an enemy, he might have a secure retreat into Janjira²²."

In 1538, Dom João de Castro who later on became the fourth Portuguese Viceroy described Danda river as the largest inlet in the western coast. Inside were two islands, one close to the land, the other fortified and sheltered from the sea by a long stretch of land in the shape of an elephant's trunk²³.

SIDDIS

Janjira in fact came into prominence in the late 15th or early 16th century when Siddis became its virtual masters. Who were these Siddis, how they became invincible lords of Janjira and Danda-Rajpuri and how the island came to be called Habshan or Habsan are interesting questions having a colourful background behind them.

The Siddis in reality were descendants of Africans transported to India originally as slaves. It is not out of place to record here that the term 'Siddi' is still applied to holy men in Morocco²⁴.

Peeping deep into the hoary history of slavery, one doubt that becomes clearer is that the slaves were brought to India from African coasts from very early times. As early as A.D. 70 and 80, Abyssinian slaves from Opone were reported to have been exported to Egyptian market. In the 3rd century A.D., the forts of Konkan such as Sopara, Kalyan, Chaul and Pal near Mahad were the principal trade centres for Arab merchants. The articles then traded also included slaves. During 810-1260 A.D., they were brought from Sofala in Africa to Thana ports where the Silaharas were ruling²⁵. The forced migration of negroes seems to have given boost to the expansion of trade to India by the Arabs in the 6th century A.D.²⁶.

Actually, the word Siddi is derived from Syed, man of a priestly calling or tendencies²⁷. The descendants of one external group (the Lemba) in Africa still swear by 'Sayid', but they do not know who he was, nor anybody cares to know²⁸. According to the Oxford dictionary, Siddi means lord or prince. Siddi is a respectful term and has been commonly used in North Africa. It is somewhat akin to the word Sahib used in India. Specifically, it is said to be an honorific title given to the descendants of African natives in western India²⁹. Enthoven has also noted that Siddi literally meant a master³⁰. They also came to be known as Habshis, and the term Habshi is derived from the Arabic word El Habish, the people of West Africa. Since Abyssinia was called in Arabic 'Al Habish', these slaves came to be known in India as Habshi and Janjira under them also became Habshan during the course of time. It was around the middle of the

15th century that Abyssinian slaves were sought in greater demand in western India because the Bahamani dynasty had come into existence and the real communication with north India had suffered a setback³¹. Of course, the Bahamanis did enlist the Abyssinian slaves into their services as sailors and soldiers on account of their docile nature, intelligence, talents and courage. That is the reason why one finds references to them as holding top positions under the Nizamshahas of Ahmadnagar and Adilshahas of Bijapur in later periods. Nevertheless prior to their absorption in the services of the above rulers, Ruku-ud-Din Barbek, the overlord of Gaur in Bengal (1459-1474) had engaged a number of African slaves and he was the first ruler in India to promote them in large numbers to high positions and ranks in his service³².

Though it is not unknown that the rulers of the slave dynasty in North India used to enlist a large number of slaves in their services, the earliest reference to their growing influence in Indian history emerges during the rule of Razia Sultan, daughter of Sultan Iltutmish. She chose Jalaluddin Yakut, a Habshi slave as the in-charge of royal stables, and ultimately fell in love with him forfeiting her crown and life³³.

Far more peculiar was the case of slaves in Bengal. During the rule of Jalaluddin Fath Shah (1481-87), the Abyssinian slaves had become ungovernable. When he tried to subject them to repressive measures, the chief eunuch, Sultan Shahzada, hatched a plot and in collaboration with the

disgruntled Abyssinian slaves assassinated Shah in 1486. Then Sultan Shahzada assuming the title of Barbek Shah crowned himself but was slain shortly by Malik Andil, the loyal Abyssinian commander. After a short duration, Shamsuddin Muzaffar Shah, nick-named Diwana, ascended the throne. However, his rule was marked with terror. He eliminated practically all the suspected Hindu and Muslim nobles and in the process did not show any leniency even to the common people and soldiers. Consequently, his Wazir beleaguered him in his fort and ordered his annihilation secretly by the end of 1493³⁴. Obviously, the Abyssinians invited bitter feelings and the wrath against them. It led to the popular uprising resulting ultimately into the expulsion of the Africans from Bengal, most of whom migrated towards Deccan and later on to Gujarat³⁵.

Thus, having seen the historical background of Janjira and Danda-Rajpuri, their strategic location and a brief introduction of the Siddis, it will be interesting to explore the African diaspora in India deeper showing how the Siddis started settling in various parts of India, how they marched gradually from slavery to the position of power and royalty, and how Siddis of Janjira tried to retain their stronghold against all odds notwithstanding the mighty potentates in the neighbourhood with great dexterity. The attempt is made here for the first time to probe deeply into the relations between the Portuguese and the Siddis vis-a-vis Mughals, Marathas, Peshvas, the Dutch and the British.

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CHAPTER II

SIDDIS' SETTLEMENTS IN INDIA AND THEIR RISE FROM SLAVERY TO ROYALTY (from the beginning to 1626 A.D.)

The earliest Indian links with Africa can be traced in the light of latest archaeological findings. There are now eight or nine ancient sites in South Asia which have yielded evidence for the prehistoric production of Jowar (Sorghum bicolor) of African origin. Jowar was grown at Pirack (Gujarat) in the earliest period dating back to circa 1900 B.C. There are sufficient grounds to prove the African origin of the millet also, though non-biological evidence is lacking for contact between India and Africa during or prior to the 2nd millennium. The only possibility that emerges is the direct connection across the Indian Ocean and the Arabian sea. Since the overland route to India could not be of any practical use, there is a reason to suppose that protohistoric maritime activity connecting the Indian sub-continent to Mesopotamia was fairly wider in scope than the available historical records reveal¹.

In 2000 B.C. Indian cotton was widely in use in Mesopotamia where Indian traders had their settlement. Sesamum, wheat, rice were exported to East Africa from India. In Gujarat, at Lothal (2300 B.C.) harbour structures have been found of that era confirming the existence of port and dockyard facilities on the Indian side of the trade route where ships could load and unload their goods. Therefore, it can be conclusively averred that the earliest trade in the Indian Ocean existed between the Gulf and Western India, especially Gujarat, Cutch and Sind in and

around 2000 B.C.²

Although much more evidence from the archaeological explorations is yet to come forth, it can be assumed that the East African coast and the islands have been involved in the Indian Ocean trade for more than 2000 years. It is recognised all over the world that the trade and the hold over natural resources had been the principal reason behind the foundation of the great civilisations of the Indian Ocean regions from the epoch of the Sumerians and Harappans. There exist only two pre-Islamic sites in East Africa rendering evidence of overseas trade and commerce. These are Ras Hafun in Somalia and Chibuene in Mozambique³. They reveal evidence in support of the writings of Pliny, Strabo (54 B.C.-24 A.D.) and the Periplus of the Erythrean Sea, thus providing a sort of guide for the sea borne trade between India and the Roman Empire, during the periods of the last quarter of the first century A.D., in the 2nd century during Ptolemy's time, and of Cosmas (author of Christian Topography) in the 6th century when the trade was carried out from the Mediterranean and Asian regions to the East African coast, called Azania in ancient times⁴.

Periplus has described in the Periplus how the Arabs of Muza in the 1st century A.D. navigated down the coast with the north east monsoon in winter and cast their anchors at several trading centres en route. On their return in the north, some of the merchandise was transported to the Red Sea ports—Berenice and Myos Hormos—and from there by camel through the deserts to Coptos regions on River Nile, from where they were shipped to Alexandria. From Opone, the remaining goods would have reached east to the Gulf and southern and eastern Asia, and eastern merchandise would

have come back by the same route. Little wonder this traditional trade course underwent tremendous change with the discovery of the monsoon winds by Hippalus in the 1st century A.D. when vessels began traversing directly across the ocean to and from India⁵.

During the 3rd to 5th centuries A.D., the trade between East Africa and South Asia seems to have ceased as no ceramics from there have yet been discovered at Ras Hafun, an evidence of Safavid Persian hold over Western Indian trade. But the connection with the Gulf did continue⁶. The forcible migration of Negroes from the African sub-continent into India went up only in the 6th century A.D. when the Arabs expanded their trade with India.

The ample sources are available to substantiate this contention. As early as 636 A.D., an expedition had been dispatched from the Persian Gulf to pillage the flourishing port of Thana on the Western coast of India, in the vicinity of Bombay. Thirty years later, the Arabs again touched this port⁷. After the coming of Islam on the world scene and consequent upon the conquest of Persia by the Arabs in the 7th century, the Arab merchants tried to control the oceanic commerce of the Konkan ports⁸.

Later on during the rule of Vikramaditya-II, the Tajakas or Arabs had attacked the Gujarat province of the Chalukyas. As described in Navasari plates dated 739 A.D., Avanijashraya Pulakesin of the Gujarat branch of Chalukya dynasty repelled the very hostile onslaughts of the Tajakas⁹. It is noteworthy that a Muslim colony of Honawat

in North Karnataka which was governed by Jalal-ud-Din (1342) has been rightly considered as the ancestors of the adventurous Muhammadan business community in Kanara, known as Navaiyats i.e. newcomers. According to Ibn Batuta who happened to travel through Karnataka they followed the tenets of Shafi. It was obvious, they were emigrants from Arabia, who had fled from their motherland to escape the fury and persecution of Hajjaj, the Governor of Iraq, at the end of the 7th century A.D. While in India, they opted for commerce and slowly they captured the entire coastal trade¹⁰.

The Arabs had not only monopolised the early carrying trade between Arabia and Malabar, but also had made several settlements on the Malabar and Konkan coasts. The fact that there were well established Muslim settlements, 'Hanjamans' in Goa at the beginning of the 7th century has also been recognised¹¹. It is also believed that the Abyssinians had also established colonies along the whole western coast of India from Cape Comorin upwards at a very early period of the Christian era, of which Rajpuri is one of the last remaining¹². During the reign of the Great Naushervan (531 to 578 A.D.), when the Persians were dominating the trade of the eastern seas, the relations between Western India and Persia were close. In 850 A.D., the Arab merchant Sulaiman was carrying on his trade in Konkan when it was under Balhara, the Chief of Indian Princes, who was at war with the Goojar King. Sixty years later (916 A.D.), Masudi informs us that the whole Province of Lar, from Chaul to

Cambay, came under the sway of Balhara who was extremely friendly with the Muslims as compared to all Indian Kings and whose capital was Mankir (Malkhet) in Karnataka¹³. That the Arab merchants had already settled in Goa during the rule of Kadambas is confirmed further as the inscriptions so far discovered often use the word 'Turushkas',¹⁴.

As far as India is concerned, there is no doubt that this country had attracted Europeans long before the time of Alexander the Great (356-323 B.C.), though subsequently Egyptians, Persians, Arabs, Sabaeans and Turks effectively segregated her from Europe. According to C. Hromnik, India had seaworthy ships and it must have left a deep mark on all the coasts of the ocean that bears its name i.e. the Indian Ocean. The works of early writers make it amply clear that Indian ships sailed regularly to the coast of East Africa at the time. The range of items such as Indian 'Bhang', coconut scrapers, beads, cotton, metalwork, architecture, different currencies in the east and even South Africa covered the period between 3000 to 200 B.C. Indian gold mining on and around the south Zambezi plateau might have started as early as the end of the 2nd millennium B.C. In the opinion of Hromnik, the arrow-heads, the first tools made in Africa, had Indian origin and the linguistic evidence, as the best recorder of history, further make us believe that the area which is called in modern times as 'Sub-Saharan Africa' was in fact Indo-Africa¹⁵. S.A.I. Tirmizi's scholarly work on Indian sources for African history clearly reveals that ebony, ivory and cotton goods including silk meant for wrapping the well-known Egyptian

mummies were supplied to Egypt in the 2nd millennium B.C. by the Abyssinian and Somali traders who used to transport them from India. He avers that the trade between India and East African coast has been going on at least since Roman times¹⁶.

Given this scenario, an element of surprise is that the earliest archaeological evidence for maritime activity in India brought to light by S.R. Rao while excavating Lothal (2300 B.C.) on Gujarat coast includes the terracotta models of an African guerilla and mummy¹⁷.

As is evident, all this information undoubtedly links India with Africa through the ages, and the descendants of early traders who had settled and intermarried with other races over the years form an important cluster of the ethnic grouping at various places. However, all the settlers did not come to India on their own. Many were brought as slaves for several centuries and their history is indeed a sorrowful tale of sufferings and pain on one side and the colourful episode of their rise and fall on the other. Nevertheless, some of them played unexpected, crucial and unique roles in shaping the history of the regions.

The chequered history of the Islamised African communities (Habshis) in India is one such untold story. Though frequently mentioned in the historical accounts of India, it did not attract the attention it deserved.

Originally, majority of the Africans shipped to India probably came from the Horn of Africa and that is why the term Habshi seems to have been applied to all the Blacks. The information is available about the Habshis employed as men-at-arms on vessels sailing down the West Indian coast, and there is a good deal of evidence to prove that such employment dated back to Pre-Islamic times. Under the Sultanates of North India, the Habshis came to occupy important positions. Besides Sultan Raziya's favourite Jalaluddin Yakut who is well-known in Indian History, a Habshi was instrumental in establishing a mosque in Lahore during 12th century A.D.¹⁸. Another famous Habshi in North India was Siddi Maula, whose austere piety was overglorified by a mysterious source of unusual opulence. The Siddi had a vast Khanqah, where people of all classes were liberally welcomed. A hermit by temperament, he belonged to an unorthodox sect of the Durweshes, and from the times of Sultan Kaiqubad, his amazing charitable actions had created around him such an aura that several Balbani Amirs and officers in distress as well as the religious devotees flocked towards him. The immigrant Mongol Chief, Malik Ulghu, had disclosed that Siddi Maula had plotted to have the Sultan Jalaluddin Khalji slain on an auspicious day, Friday by two Hindu officers of the old regime, Hatya Naik and Niranjan Kotwal with the ultimate aim of becoming himself Khalifa. Though the investigative set-up did not have any decisive evidence to frame charges against him, the old Sultan was sure of Siddi Maula's scheming against him.

Consequently both the Hindu Officers were executed and despite Maulana Siddi's frequent avowals of innocence, he was pitilessly stabbed and ultimately trampled to death under the feet of an elephant. Siddi's admirers however believed in his innocence and linked it to the devastation caused by an uncontrollable storm, continuous drought and famine conditions in Delhi and Shivaliks, followed by the disastrous death of the Sultan¹⁹.

An important aspect to note is that the Siddis were held in high respect right from the time of Prophet Mohammad. For instance Siddi Bilal was one of the earliest faithful disciples of the Prophet²⁰. His daily rendition of Azan from the Holy Mosque at Mecca was so impressive that it had an enchanting impact on devotees. Expectedly, Prophet himself had eulogized him and had said: "If a Negro slave with a slit nose is your Amir (Commander) and leads you according to the book of Allah, hear him and obey him"²¹. The praise by the Prophet must have inspired his followers to call them Siddis (Negro Slaves) out of reverence. No wonder then that all the black slaves transported from different parts of Africa into the Indian sub-continent considered it a honour to be called Siddis.

It is critically important to understand that the Siddis or Habshis still found scattered in India do not claim a single descent as their ancestors were brought to India as slaves from different countries in East Africa in mixed groups from time to time, though a few of them might have come

to trade here and ultimately settled down. They are found in Gujarat, Diu, Hyderabad, coastal Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka and Bengal. They are known as Kafirs, Khapri or Khafris and Mulattos in Goa, Daman and Diu²². In the Rajkot district of Gujarat, Siddis are called Siddi Badshah. In Marathi documents, they figure as Shamal (black faced) because of their complexion²³. For the sake of uniformity the preference is given to call them only Siddis as they are popularly known so today in the country. In historical documents written in Portuguese and English, they are spelled as Seede, Sidde, Siddis, Siddie, Siddee, Siddy, Sidi, Sidy, Sedee, Scidee, Scidy, Seydee, Scidddee, Abeixin, Abeixim, Habshis, Abyssinians, Coffree, Caffree, Kaphirs, Kafra, Mulattos etc.²⁴.

In a related development, now after the destruction of Bagdad in 1258, Delhi assumed the importance as a great centre of Islamic learning and culture. Several Muslim scholars and soldiers from Iraq and elsewhere migrated to settle down in different parts of India. The elevation to the throne of Delhi by Sultan Jalaluddin Khalji in 1290 led to the beginning of the extension of the Delhi empire in the south. However, the authority of the Delhi Sultans appear to have reached its zenith during the rule of Muhammad-bin-Tughluq who on subduing all the distant territories in the south, annexed them ultimately. When he shifted his capital from Delhi to Devguiri and renamed it Daulatabad, it soon became a great centre of political and cultural importance²⁵.

Whatever be the different interpretations, the Arabs were undoubtedly masters of the Indian Ocean from the 6th century A.D. till the advent of the Portuguese in India. During this period, they were the chief promoters of the enslavement of Africans into India²⁶. When the Bahmani dynasty in South India severed its connections with the Delhi Sultanate and became independent, the interaction with North India almost ceased. The immediate fall-out of this action was the fashion of bringing to western India Abyssinians and other East Africans in large numbers. Though originally they were enslaved, their robust constitution, trustworthiness, courage, energy, faithfulness and character made them easy to attain positions of high ranks in the Bahmani court. The observations of Orme throw a flood of light on their arrival and subsequent rise in India. He says: "The successful Abyssinians, gathered round them, all of their countrymen whom they could procure either by purchase or simple invitation, including negroes from other parts of Africa, as well as Abyssinians. It was from their marriages, first with the natives of India and afterwards among their own families, that there arose a separate community, distinct from other Musalmans in figure, colour, character. As soon as they were strong enough, they found themselves into an aristocratic republic, the skill and utility of the lowest orders giving them influence, and influence fostering a pride in their name which made them among the most skillful and daring sailors and soldiers in western India"²⁷.

Orme's statement fits well in our chronology as one finds them holding high positions under the Sultan of Gujarat, Nizamshahas of Ahmadnagar, and Adilshahas of Bijapur in later periods, in the aftermath of the disintegration of Bahmani Kingdom.

It is then no matter of surprise that, towards the end of the 15th century one Siddi Yakut is mentioned as admiral of Bahadur Gilani, son of the Bahamani Governor of Goa. In 1493, Bahadur is reported to have deputed Yakut with a fleet of 20 ships against the Gujarat fort of Mahim near Bombay. Since the establishment of Muslim rule in the Deccan, Janjira, the fort and Danda-Rajpuri, the port rose to great prominence when the region was under the king of Ahmadnagar. However, it was Malik Ahmad (1490-1508), the founder of the Nizamshahi dynasty at Ahmadnagar who initially installed Abyssinians as the captains of the island fort of Janjira. Danda-Rajpuri had been captured by him in 1490 after a protracted siege. It is recorded that Janjira was stormed by him in vain for six months. According to an interesting legend, Ahmad looking down from the rocky shore across the half mile of sea to the fort lost heart and turning to his General Salabat Khan and his slave Yakut Khan said, 'who can take a fort whose moat is the sea'? Salabat Khan was silent but his slave Siddi Yakut is said to have dashed down the rocks. He threw himself into the sea, swore for not to return without the head of the Captain of the fort. Ahmad sent a boat after him. But Yakut raised himself

in the water and struck at the boat with his sword declaring that he would not come back unless the king commanded him and sent his ring in token of his command. Ahmad sent his ring and Yakut binding it in his turban swam ashore. Pleased with his courage Ahmad promised that, if Janjira fell, Yakut should command it. The seizure of Janjira was pressed after Ahmad captured Shivneri, the fort of Junnar in Poona. With a large force of black slaves, Siddi Yakut swam across one night and surprised the defenders, who were overpowered and the Koli garrison present there were tied to chains and thrown off the sea. Subsequently, Ahmad rebuilt and strengthened the fortification and as promised entrusted its command to his Abyssinian slave, Siddi Yakut²⁸.

Opposed to this there is yet another interesting account describing how Siddis took possession of the island by deception. One Perim Khan and one or two other Abyssinians, disguised as merchants, brought from Surat a shipload of large-size boxes said to contain wine and silk. They sought the permission of Ram Patil, the Koli captain of the island, to land their goods there. He agreed and in return, they entertained the garrison with wine. The Kolis having drunk in excess, the disguised merchants opened some of the boxes in which armed men were hidden, attacked and took possession of the fort. According to local information gathered in the second half of the 19th century, Ram Patil had embraced Islam and had been appointed Governor of the island under the name of Ithbar Rav. Other version obtained

from another source during the same period revealed that it was Burhan Nizam Shah (1508-1553) who handed over Janjira and Danda-Rajpuri to his famous Shia Minister, Shah Tahir, who in 1537 persuaded Burhan to confirm the Shia faith as the State religion of Ahmadnagar, and this accounts for the existence of Shia shrine of Panchayatan Pir in the fort of Janjira²⁹. According to Momin, Burhan entrusted the place to his spiritual Shia Guru Mabligshah Tairul Husaini³⁰.

These accounts which are much more than just legends contain a great deal of grains of historical authenticity. What emerges ultimately from a close scrutiny of whatever information available to us can be summed up thus: There lived a Koli King in a palatial house nearby in Dighi in the beginning of the 15th century. Rajpuri was then a township of fisherfolk community but it used to attract a great variety of merchandize. There prevailed a constant danger of sea-pirates including the Moroccans and Abyssinians. In order to protect himself, the King got surveyed the area and the island was found ideally suited as it had the facility of drinking water as well. Accordingly, a Medhekol (wooden fort) was constructed over there. After his death, his queen Mahikavati continued to rule from there. However, the place being extremely secure, Nizamshah was keen on occupying it. He had already captured Rajpuri earlier in 1489 but could not seize Janjira as the sea afforded natural protection to it. Koli Captain Ram Patil of course defended it valiantly for long. One dark night, a camouflaged Abyssinian fleet

anchored off Janjira and a small delegation led by Perim Khan, new Wazir of Nizamshah, disguised as traders humbly sought favour from Ram Patil to unload big size 300 boxes of wine and silk as he feared a danger from the pirates in the vicinity. But after a great deal of persuasion, he was dissuaded to bring in only the goods and the men were to be kept off the fort. The 300 big size boxes purportedly of goods were brought inside the fort and as a response to cordial feelings the guards there were offered wine by Perim Khan and some Abyssinians accompanying him. The Kolis unfortunately drank to excess and when they were in the state of inebriation, the hidden armed soldiers from the boxes came out to the surprise of the garrison and captured the fort (1490). Later, Ram Patil was forcibly converted and was renamed Etbar Rav (trusted ruler). He was allowed to be in command of the fort till 1498. However, he could not go well with Perim Khan who got him beheaded finally. Subsequently, Perim Khan stayed out for twelve years till 1510. Much later, Nizamshah gave the fort to his Shia Minister in 1537. Thirty years later in 1567 the construction of a new Pankot (water fort) was started there by Burhan and completed in 1571. There are four other inscriptions dated 1694-1700, 1705, 1710-1711 and 1727-1728. According to the first one, Siddi Surul Khan constructed two Halmuk walls, while the second reveals that the Siddi chief completed the walls of both the sides of the main gate. The third states that the fort, its walls and the gate facing the sea were constructed by Fahim Khan, while the last one states that it was during Shah Alam's time (1707-1712) that a new

fort of such a great height was built up by Yakut Khan II that its bastions looked sky-high. In 1669, it still was in possession of the three iron anchors of the ship used by Perim Khan while playing a ruse to capture the fort.

While tracing the course of developments at the Janjira fort, it must be remembered that soon after capturing the fort from Kolis in 1490, the Nizamshah is reported to have deputed Siddi chiefs to Ganesh Daivadnya Joshi, a great astrologer of the time, with extraordinary spiritual powers, in order to know from him the right auspicious time (Muhurt) at the earliest. The Brahmin whose repute had spread far and wide lived in a nearby village, Nandgaon, seven kms. away. When the four Siddis on horse back reached the village, the Brahmin had gone out. His young daughter asked them the purpose of their visit. The Siddis told her that Perim Khan was going to construct a Jaldurg (water fort) at Janjira and they had come to know from the Brahmin the right Muhurt for the purpose. The innocent girl said 'I will tell you soon as my father had taught me, Tommorow morning is the best': i.e. Monday, Falgun, Shuddha Navami, two ghatka and six Palle after Sunrise.

When the father returned and came to know about it, he said, "Oh what have you done. This Muhurt is Amrityog and the fort will remain invincible for hundreds of years. We are Brahmins and the butchers should not be told where the cow is".³¹

The inference obviously is that the Siddis managed to snatch the fort of Janjira from its Hindu masters at the end of the 15th century. At another level, the political situation in Deccan was also conducive for their rise to power. Almost entire Deccan was in turmoil on account of the feuds among various Muslim princes. The Sunnis fought against Shias and Deccanis frowned upon the foreigners --- Arabs, Turks, Persians, Mughals, Afghans and Abyssinians, thereby all playing their part to destabilize and cripple the regions by scheming, battles and slayings³².

The Russian traveller Nikitin who had visited the famous port of Dabhol in 1459 had described its links with Mecca and Khurasan. The place had become famous for Arab horses as well as for Habshis who had settled there by that time³³.

As history bears out, by the end of the 15th century the African slaves were in great demand especially in South Indian Courts. The advent of the Portuguese in India (1498) did not change much the scenario and the slave trade remained quite prosperous and brisk in the centuries to come. The docility, talents, intelligence of the African slaves fetched them good employment in the states ruled by the Muslims. In the beginning of the 16th century (1514), Barbosa noticed that the Moors valued much the Abyssinian slaves, who were Christians and were used in war. These Christian slaves were sharp, well-built and faithful and when they turned Muslims, they proved better in calibre than the original Moors³⁴. Thus

much before the arrival of the Portuguese in India, a significant number of African slaves had already occupied the seats of power not only in armies and naval forces of various rulers but also in civil administration. The only notable difference in the aftermath of the Portuguese presence here was that their popularity reached all the Portuguese territories. During the conquests of Chaul, Bassein (near Bombay), Daman and Diu (Gujarat) and any other establishments or fortresses on the western coasts of India, the Portuguese had to give tough fights in battles against the Indian potentates who had recruited the Siddis in large number in their armed forces. On account of their excellent navigational skills they were specially entrusted with the charge of forts on the coastal line. Besides Janjira, Daman was another comfortable focal point of their convergence, from where they pursued their mercantile or piratical ventures along the western coast. In order to safeguard Bassein, Daman then under the control of the Abyssinian chief with 3000 soldiers was acquired by the Portuguese Governor Dom Constantino de Braganza (1558-61) with the consent of the Shah of Gujarat at Ahmadabad, who being minor was defied by the Habshi commander. Portuguese Governor, Dom Constantino de Braganza started from Goa for Daman with a fleet of hundred ships with two or three thousand soldiers. At Chaul and Bassein, he received further reinforcements. He arrived with his entire naval force off the mouth of the Daman river on 2nd February 1559 it being the feast of the Purification of Our Lady. The Abyssinians and Turks were led by Siddi Bofeta, Siddi Rana and Siddi Kernabek but soon they sounded a

retreat without firing. However, Siddi Bofeta before retreating to Parnel from where he continued his resistance for some time had got assassinated a number of residents on the suspicion that they had conspired with the Portuguese. The Portuguese gradually expanded their control on the North upto River Bulsar. After 1560, the entire coast of the North Konkan from Daman to Karkanja came under Portuguese possession. Dom Diogo de Noronha, the first Governor of Daman, was attacked twice by Siddi Bofeta and Siddi Rana in the fort of Bulsar. Due to the two bloody wars, the fort had to be abandoned by the Portuguese and it fell to the Habshis. His successors however had to battle strenuously to retain the vast territories of 96 kilometres and the town with its fortress against the repeated onslaughts of the neighbouring princes. To resume the thread of the narrative, initially the Portuguese had to face the Abyssinians who found themselves safe in the Panera or Parnel fort which was so well guarded with sufficient war material that the Portuguese could not attack them directly. So the Portuguese planned a stratagem in which at the agreed signal they swooped upon the unprepared Siddis and the artillery bombarded the fort. The surprised Siddis, under the impression that the whole Portuguese army led by the Viceroy was laying siege to the fort, fled away abandoning 33 bronze cannons and a huge amount of coins³⁵.

Given the kind of exposure and importance, the Abyssinians had also settled in Diu. The Portuguese Governor

Nuno da Cunha in 1531 had to dispatch a powerful fleet there to dislodge many Rumes and Habshis from there³⁶.

It is apparent that most of the Abyssinians in the Indian sub-continent had joined either armies or navies. However, a few engaged themselves in petty trades. The Portuguese writer, Barros, had noticed in 1533 three Abyssinians of the country of the Prester John who had come to sell provisions to the Portuguese ships³⁷.

It is indeed difficult to conceive how the Portuguese by 1534 were successful to get from Sultan Bahadur of Gujarat Bassein and its dependencies including seven islands of Bombay³⁸. Sultan Bahadur had thousands of Abyssinians in his army. He greatly appreciated their fighting qualities and when Turkish Generals during Muslim invasion of Abyssinia in 1527 captured thousands of them and brought them to India, he took all of them in his services. Throughout the 15th and 16th centuries, the Habshis continued to make marked progress especially in Gujarat. But the chroniclers who no doubt were prejudiced against them gave no credence to the role played by them in moulding the history of the later Muzaffarids. However, the case of Hajjid Dabir was different and his role was recognised. He was for many years in the service of the Habshi nobles of Gujarat and Khandesh. He was born in 1539 in Mecca, and came at the age of 16 to Gujarat and rose up to become the Secretary under Muhammad Ulugh Khan, the powerful Abyssinian noble till the conquest of Gujarat by Akbar in

1573. Later, he served under Fulad Khan, the powerful Abyssinian noble of Khandesh³⁹.

It may be relevant to mention here that after the conquest of Egypt, the Turks tried to expel the Portuguese from the Persian Gulf and Indian west coast. In 1538, Suleiman the Magnificent dispatched to India a fleet of seventy large ships with many galley-slaves and 7000 Janisars. They attacked the Portuguese in Diu but were repulsed. The Portuguese also acquired on payment the inland forts of Asheri and Manor from their Abyssinian captains in 1556⁴⁰.

Perhaps it would not be incorrect to say that the large number of Abyssinians and other aliens recruited in the armies of the Muslim Kings, not only as private soldiers but also in high positions of status indicate the importance they got in Indian polity of the period. As alluded earlier, there was a garrison of 3000 comprising mostly Abyssinians and some Turks and other white men in Daman alone. In fact, it is evident from various alliances and collaborative activities of Egyptians and Turks with the Rajas of Cochin, Cambay and others and from the history of the first voyages of the Portuguese that the Muslim powers of Europe and Africa had much more close contacts with the Muslims of the Malabar coast. Habas Khan Siddi and Siddi Umber were admirals of Nizamshahi fleet during the time of Malik Ambar, and an Abyssinian officer named Siddi Bulbul was at that time in charge of Rairi⁴¹. Even Ramraja, the Hindu Raja of Vijaynagar, the hero of the battle of Talikota in 1565 had in

his service an Abyssinian officer named Ambar Khan⁴².

Before Malik Ambar came on the scene in the Deccan, it will be worthwhile to mention here, the religious factor which had proved detrimental to the Bahmani Kingdom. The foreigners from the very beginning wielded considerable influence in the politics of the country. Bahmani Shah himself had induced several Afghans and Mughal Amirs, the fresh entrants in the Tughluq's service from abroad, to join his administration. This policy was also followed by his successors. For instance, Mujahid Shah Bahmani (1375-78) in particular, showed a noticeable fancy for Persians and Turks. Such a policy of preference and rejection sowed the seeds of ill-feelings and annoyance with the ruling gentry. In the initial stage, these aliens were not numerous enough and the Deccanis did not feel the presence of the competitors. But subsequently, the foreigners outnumbered them and formed a separate group. Besides, while majority of the aliens were Shias, most of the Deccanis were Sunnis. The Shia creed was backed by Ahmad Shah Vali. He made donations to Shia shrines and invited Shia saints to his court. This religious partisanship veered towards the Deccanis one group of aliens --- the Abyssinians, who were Sunnis. Unlike fair looking handsome, cultured migrants from Persia, Turkey, Afghanistan etc., the black, robust illiterate and uncultured Abyssinians were unimpressive and were looked upon with derision by the other foreign communities. Such a disdainful treatment obviously forced the Abyssinians to join hands of Deccanis.

Thus, in the hostilities ensued between the Deccanis and alien groups, Deccanis and Abyssinians formed one front while their rivals included Turks, Mughals, Persians, Arabs, Afghans etc⁴³. The prevailing situation had been summed up well by Jadunath Sarkar thus: "The flow of Turkish recruits from the cradle land of Central Asia was almost cut off from the Deccan by the establishment of a Chaghtai-Turq empire at Delhi in 1526 by Babur. The occupation of Afghanistan by Delhi rulers and wide-spread Shiaism in the Deccan, increased the number of Afghans into the Deccan as they had lost Delhi to the Turks. The Abyssinian immigrants here gained opportunities unequalled elsewhere for displaying their rare capacity for seafaring, land warfare, management of men and civil administration. They were no longer household slaves and palace eunuchs as was the case in North or the territories controlled by the Portuguese, but regents of Kingdom, generalissimos of armies, admirals of fleets, Viceroy of provinces"⁴⁴.

In the 16th century, as is commonly known, the Nizamshahi Kingdom of Ahmadnagar had a coastline extending from the Nagothna to the Bankot creek. The two good ports on the coast were Danda-Rajpuri and Chaul. Lopo Soares d' Albergaria, Portuguese Governor in Goa (1515-1518), had secured from Burhan Nizam Shah I concession to establish a factory at Chaul in 1516. In 1521, the Portuguese were also allowed to construct a fort at Revdanda on the northern side of the Chaul. From the naval hostilities in Chaul in 1508 till the alliance of 1570 when all the powers of the Deccan

with the help of Egyptians and Turks made a vain attempt to drive away the Portuguese from the western coast, the relations between Nizam and the Portuguese can be described as cordial. One of the major reasons for all the powers of the Deccan bestowing concessions to the Portuguese was the regular supply of Arabian horses from Goa where the trade had been monopolised and centralised successfully by them. The potentates of Bijapur, Golkonda, Ahmadnagar and Hindu Kingdom of Vijaynagar had to sign individual contracts with the Portuguese in Goa for the supply of horses requisitioned by each power⁴⁵. Thus, the Portuguese played their own unique role in the political history of South India. Though the Siddis had been ousted by them from Daman and some other coastal points, they still had the control over the adjoining territories under them. In 1560's, there was one Siddi Meriam, "a man reckoned a great cavalier entertaining 500 horses at his own charges and who greatly coveted the city of Daman to quarter himself in or atleast the whole Pargana", records the Portuguese Chronicler Couto⁴⁶. In October, 1562, this Siddi with 800 cavalry men had attacked Daman and Pargana of Bonitar and Puari and had defeated the Portuguese captain, Garcia Rodrigues de Tanna in Parnel⁴⁷.

Seeing through such a spectrum, it may be relevant to mention here that when the first Bahmani King declared independence in 1347 there were a number of petty Hindu chieftains called Poligars, Kolis in the north and Marathas in the south. Hence it can hardly be believed that the entire coast or the island ports had been under the control

of the Muslim rulers. The Hindu Chiefs paid obeisance to the Hindu Rajas of Vijaynagar or the Sultans of Golkonda. There were warlike situations over many places between the Bahmani king and the Gujarat King Ahmad Shah. As a matter of fact, almost all the coastal trading points of north Konkan remained under the suzerainty of Gujarat King throughout the 15th century. In south Konkan, the Bahmani King Ala-ud-Din II vanquished the Raja of Rairi (Raigad) in 1436 A.D. Likewise, 1453 Malik-ul-Tujar attacked the entire coast having his headquarters at Junnar. In the process, several Princes lost their claims to royalty. Finally, one Prince of the Shirke family promising to embrace Islamic faith persuaded Malik-ul-Tujar to launch an attack against Shankar Rai, Raja of Khelna (Vishalgad) with whom he represented to have been on inimical terms for long. Shirke led the army for three days through the jungles and ravines and entrapped it. Shankar Rai, who was in alliance with him pounced upon the surprised Muslim soldiers and over 7000 of them were put to death including 500 Syeds of Arabia and some Abyssinian officers. But in 1469 A.D., Mahmud Khwaja Gawan reduced considerable area of Konkan including the fort of Vishalgad despite the stiff resistance. In 1478, Bahadur Khan Gilani, son of Goa's Governor, occupied several places on the coast including Dabhol. In 1485, Malik Ahmad, who was appointed to govern Daulatabad and Junnar, soon annexed a number of Ghats and Konkan forts like Koari, Bharap or Sudhagad, Pali or Sarsagad, and Mahuli. He also tried in vain to capture Danda-Rajpuri. Subsequently, consequent upon the assassination of his father, Nizam-ul-Mulk, he announced his

independence and founded the dynasty of Ahmadnagar. Yusuf Adil Khan also proclaimed himself independent in 1489 A.D. and thus founded the Adilshahi dynasty of Bijapur. In the next century, Salsete and all the fertile areas of the north Konkan including the lower Chaul were occupied by the Portuguese. The hold of Bidar had so weakened that its Konkan region was split between the Kings of Ahmadnagar and Bijapur. The remaining Konkan was partitioned into two subedaris, the first being Kalyan covering the area from the Vaitarna to Nagothna under a Muslim officer, the remaining going down upto River Savitri was entrusted to the Habshi of Janjira, who also wielded control over the fortifications of Tala, Ghosala and Rairi⁴⁸.

To resume the thread of our analysis, it is worth noting that the last quarter of the 16th century testifies new conflicts between Ahmadnagar and Bijapur in which the three Siddis --- Ikhlas Khan, Dilavar Khan and Hamid Khan --- had their prominent roles. A detailed account of this will be in order to give the clear picture of the political scenario at this point of time.

In 1580, when Ibrahim Adilshah, succeeded Ali Adil Shah on the throne of Bijapur at the age of only 9 years, a regency was formed headed by Chand Bibi, the widow of Ali Adilshah and the sister of Murtaza Nizamshah. Kamal Khan Dakhani was appointed as the Prime Minister. Strange as it may seem, he treated with disrespect the regent and turned usurper. However, with the backing of another Deccani nobleman Kisvar Khan, Chand Bibi compelled Kamal Khan to

flee the capital and while doing so he was intercepted and was executed. Murtaza Nizamshah seizing this opportunity persuaded Ibrahim Qutbshah of Golkonda to storm Naldurg of Bijapur. Kisvar Khan dispatched a strong force against the army of 8000 horsemen proceeding from Golkonda to join the forces of Nizamshah. Qutb-Shahi contingent was however repulsed and Nizamshah's force under the command of Bhizat-ul-Mulk was also routed and a huge booty including 150 elephants was seized by Bijapuris. But when Kisvar Khan claimed the elephants as his reward, it was refused to him by the army officers who compelled him to give up his regency. A serious controversy arose between the foreigners and Siddis on the successor of Kisvar Khan, the former insisting upon the reinstatement of Sayyad Mustafa Ardistani and the latter putting forth claims of one of their own men. The foreign rank and file having left in a huff, the Siddis advanced towards Bijapur. However, Kisvar Khan saw to it that his rival Sayyad was assassinated. This death in cold blood united all the groups in Bijapur against him. While the chaotic situation prevailed at Bijapur, Salabat Khan, the Minister of Ahmadnagar ordered his forces to lay siege to the fort of Naldurg. Chand Bibi being insulted at the cold-blooded assassination of Sayyad Mustafa expressed her indignation to Kisvar Khan. He, however, arranged her incarceration in the fort of Satara. This unpopular action led to the grouping of Siddi nobles Ikhlas Khan, Dilavar Khan and Hamid Khan against him. Consequently, Kisvar Khan ran away to Ahmadnagar. Of the three Siddis, Ikhlas Khan usurped the regency, but was discharged by Chand Bibi who by then managed to return from

Satara. She then nominated Afzal Khan as the new regent but he too was slain by the hostile Siddis. They now usurped power and excommunicated several leading foreigners from the city of Bijapur. However, the moves of Ikhlas Khan were thwarted by a leading noble, Ain-ul-Mulk Kanani who put all the leading Siddis under arrest and insulted them by parading them through the streets of Bijapur. But a widespread rumour that the palace guards were rushing out to confront him on behalf of the Siddis helped the latter forcing Kanani to flee. This provided an opportunity to the Siddis to exercise the full control over the administration once again⁴⁹.

Farishta who was a witness to various battles once went to seek a meeting with Siddi Dilavar Khan but could not do so because the latter though above 80 years of age was a habitual womanizer and hence could not spare his time to meet the traveller. This Siddi noble repressed Shia creed in Bijapur and revived Sunni faith there⁵⁰. However, on being routed by Ahmadnagar's Jamal Khan, he displeased his master, and in disgust joined the services of Burhan Nizam Shah. Ibrahim Adil Shah registered his protest against his posting but got a rebuff from Nizamshah. In consequence, battle lines were drawn by the two again and this time Nizamshahi forces reached as far as Bhima. Playing a ruse, Ibrahim dispatched a message to Siddi Dilavar Khan proposing to return and assume the charge of his former post. The trick worked and he was easily entrapped, blinded and imprisoned in Satara fort where he died soon. On the other hand, Ikhlas Khan with Hamid Khan ruled the state as regent for some time. In 1594,

Ibrahim Nizamshah on succeeding his father to the throne had nominated Miyan Manju Dakhani as his Prime Minister. Ikhlas Khan, who was stationed in Ahmadnagar then had lent support to Ibrahim's brother, Ismail but later on sought pardon. Thereafter, he began to gather Abyssinians and Muvallids (foreigners but born in India) on his side. When Miya Manju also made preparations on his side, a civil war appeared imminent. Now the prospects of invading Bijapur itself were examined. Mir Safvi, the Ambassador of Bijapur who had come to congratulate Ibrahim Nizamshah and to condole the death of his father was shown courtesy. This obviously annoyed Ibrahim Adilshah who declared war against Ahmadnagar. While Ikhlas' was for war against Bijapur, Miyan Manju favoured peace. But in the battle against Siddi Hamid Khan who had marched from Bijapur to attack Ahmadnagar, the young Nizamshah was killed and his troops fled to Ahmadnagar. The Siddis then installed Bahadur, the infant son of Ibrahim Nizamshah on the throne and recommended a regency under Chand Bibi⁵¹.

Miyan Manju however did not agree to the plan. It was therefore decided that Ahmad, the son of a certain Sah Tahir who claimed to be the son of Muhammad Khudabad but was then confined in Daulatabad should be enthroned. Ultimately, he was brought to Ahmadnagar and crowned on 6th August 1594. The Chiefs now allotted almost the entire Kingdom among themselves and confined Bahadur to the fortress of Cavand after taking him forcibly from the charge of Chand Bibi. Soon, surprisingly Ahmad Nizamshah turned out to

be an imposter. So Ikhlas Khan, alongwith Muvallids and Abyssinians left him in the lurch. Miyan Manju with Deccanis and strong contingents of his son Miyan Hasan encamped the fort of Ahmadnagar for a long time. A chance shot in the camp of Ahmad led to great confusion in the fort forcing Miyan Hasan to flee and isolate himself into the fort. Ikhlas Khan thus marched forward, laid siege to the area, and sent orders to the commandant of Daulatabad to release Nehang Khan Habashi and Habas Khan Muvallid who had been incarcerated there since the rule of Burhan Nizamshah II (1591). He also ordered to the commandant of the fort of Cavand to hand over Prince Bahadur unto him, which he refused. Ikhlas then selected a child of the same age and proclaimed him as the descendant and legal heir of the late Ibrahim Nizamshah. With such a clout, he amassed a force of 10-12000 cavalrymen. Miyan Manju being panicky wrote to Prince Murad, the son of Emperor Akbar, and Governor of Gujarat to rush to his rescue promising him the revenues of the Kingdom of Ahmadnagar. While Murad accepted the offer promptly, a large army of Deccanis had already deserted Ikhlas Khan and joined Miyan Manju who attacked Ikhlas on 18th September 1594 and completely routed him. But by then 30000 strong force including Rajputs under Murad reached there. Miyan Manju now repented to see them as he could have decided the issue himself⁵².

Thus, the unusual situation forced the Mughals on the Deccan scene, who had to tackle the most intelligent Abyssinian who figured in Indian history as Malik Ambar. By

now, the Siddis with clout became real kingmakers and were so powerful that one Siddi Hamid Khan, a eunuch, dared to put Chand Bibi to death in her private chamber. In August 1600, Akbar's forces seized the capital of Ahmadnagar and its King Bahadur Nizamshah (nephew of Chand Bibi) was lodged in the state prison. But the entire Kingdom outside the capital was safe. Nizamshahi nobles therefore rushed to their provinces, and one of them enthroned Burhan Nizamshah called Murtaza II, a son of Prince Shah Ali as King with Parenda in the south as his capital; either in late 1600 or early 1601⁵³. The result was Malik Ambar, Raju Dakhni and others attracted towards them the dismissed soldiers of the almost defunct Kingdom, fought vehemently the invaders and re-established the Nizamshahi. Within a short span of time, Malik Ambar was found leading the movement to expel the Mughals from the Deccan⁵⁴.

Significantly, Malik Ambar was a slave purchased by Khwaja Baghdadi Mir Qasim in Baghdad. He sold him at Ahmadnagar to one Mirak Dabir, better known as Changuis Khan. Dabir had with him 1000 purchased slaves. When Nizamshahi was in the decline, Ambar served Dabir with a meagre allowance. When Mughals continued to hold sway over the Kingdoms of Khandesh, Berar and Daulatabad, Ambar joined the services of Ibrahim Adil Shah on a position of insignificant and ordinary rank. When the Nizamshahi was losing ground continuously, Abhang Khan Habshi, rebelled against Bahadur Nizamshah and attracted the attention of other Abyssinians. Ambar too joined Abhang Khan, worked hard for him and rose to the position of a commander of 150 horsemen. Ambar had also

married the widow of Changuis Khan, his previous master⁵⁵.

During the Mughal attack against Ahmadnagar, he was under Abhang Khan Habshi and fought remarkably well. Ambar along with Raju Dakhani created terror on the frontiers and enlisted the robbers in thousands and many leading men gathered around him. At the time of the conquest of Ahmadnagar fort, when the Mughals were busy occupying that Kingdom, Ambar repulsed, killed and plundered many of them, being victorious everywhere till his army swelled to 7000 strong and many of the Nizamshah nobles came under his banner.⁵⁶.

Before joining Abhang Khan, Malik Ambar had tried to enter services at Bijapur and Golkonda Kingdoms but had to return to Ahmadnagar in 1597 disillusioned. He played the significant role in proclaiming Murtaza Nizam Shah II as the King. He offered his daughter to the new king who married her and became his Prime Minister. Imbued with the lofty aim of preserving the Kingdom, he sought the aid from the Portuguese against the Mughals in the years to come. While Abul Fazl was engaged in fight against Raju Dakhani, Malik Ambar attacked Mughal Telangana, subdued Mughal commander Bahadur Gilani, penetrated deep into their countryside and then returned victorious to Ahmadnagar. His fast strides from one region to another forced Abul Fazl to give up forays against Raju Dakhani. However, Ambar faced the defeat at the hands of the Mughal forces in May 1601 at Nanded from where he fled. But Raju stuck to his guns. Meanwhile, Ambar too launched attacks against Hamid Khan, Baz Bahadur

and Bahadur Mulk and totally defeated them imprisoning Baz Bahadur and Hamid Khan. Finally, left with no alternative, Prince Daniyal had to conclude a peace treaty with Murtaza Nizam Shah II⁵⁷.

The extent evidence seems to show that on one hand, the brave Malik Ambar defended Ahmadnagar by facing the onslaughts of the forces of the great Mughal with uncommon chivalry and on the other he maintained excellent diplomatic rapport with various potentates of the period including the Portuguese whom he did not budge whenever the situations warranted. It is amazing to note here that the Portuguese were keeping a close watch over the emerging political scenario and as early as 18th February 1595, the Portuguese King had sent instructions to his Viceroy Matias de Albuquerque, to complete the fortification of Bassein as Malik Ambar was already raising the fort in Chaul and his captains were carrying out incursions on the lands and villages of the Portuguese occupied Chaul⁵⁸. The Portuguese were planning to destroy the fort built by Malik Ambar and were holding talks with Adil Shah in this regard. But the skilled diplomat as he was, Malik Ambar manoeuvred in such a fashion that the Portuguese ultimately had to assist him against the Mughals. It so happened that the King of Portugal urged upon the Viceroy in early 1596 to be ready for the Mughal attack⁵⁹. The well-thought of strategy of the Portuguese against the Mughals included a defensive alliance with Malik Ambar and the chiefs of Dabhol and the neighbouring kingdoms. However, the Viceroy was confident

that Akbar would not dare to clash with the Portuguese in the sea⁶⁰. The Portuguese Crown further wrote on 8th January 1598 to D. Francisco da Gama to unite all Deccani powers into a well-knit alliance in order to face the Mughal onslaught by secret means and without causing any suspicion⁶¹.

It might be recalled that in 1605, Akbar died and by 1607 Malik Ambar conquered Junnar and declared it as the capital of the Kingdom of Nizamshah. Ambar had also restored most of the territory for his king. But local records reveal that Governors of Danda-Rajpuri till 1618 were Mughal officers, though neither the Portuguese were dislodged from Revdanda nor the Siddis from the forts on the coast⁶².

During the period of Jahangir (1605-1627), there was no change in Portuguese diplomacy and they supported Adilshah, Malik Ambar, Venkata Naik etc. against the Mughal. Ambar had also authorised the Portuguese in 1604 to collect half land revenue of the district of Chaul. But when the peasants were subjected to pay full, he forced them to return the excess revenue⁶³. The Portuguese Viceroy, Aires de Saldanha, himself had proceeded to Bassein to settle the matter with Malik Ambar⁶⁴. When Adilshah's ambassador was in Goa, he spoke on making the peace with Malik Ambar as his King had already written to him to depute a person for the purpose. The Viceroy however directed his Captain to deal with those Moors with much care and withdraw the fleet for two or three months only in case if Malik Ambar showed signs of slow movements⁶⁵. Finally, a letter signed by Malik Ambar (18th September 1615) was sent and with the personal intervention of Adilshah, it

was agreed to maintain the terms settled earlier between Murtaza Nizamshah and the Portuguese, which also included that the English and the Dutch should not be allowed to touch his ports⁶⁶.

It is not out of place to record here that the Portuguese had expected the dangerous consequences with the advancing Mughals, and once in January 1616 Viceroy Dom Jeronimo de Azevedo had expressed that he was convinced that war with them was unavoidable⁶⁷. The King while eulogizing the Viceroy for roping in the kings of Deccan against the Mughals also directed him in 1617 that this was to be done in such a manner that the existing peace with the Mughal was not breached. The King further opined that though the Kingdom of Bijapur was not as powerful as the Mughal state, it was a buffer wall between the two and in case he found the Mughals firmly advancing to the port of Narara (Manor ?) all the preventive measures were to be taken by concentrating all the possible force in the sea in order to capture the fort of Danda before the same was occupied by them. The King's fear was that if the Mughals captured the fort of Danda, it would cause great anxiety to the Portuguese⁶⁸. From this, it can be gauged how much importance the Portuguese attached to the fort of Danda. Here, it may not be forgotten that when the Portuguese in Chaul encroached upon orchards, palm trees and some properties coming under Malik Ambar, he boldly attacked them and drove them out. The Portuguese in fact were compelled to retreat and take shelter in their fort while

their country outside was devastated by Malik Ambar's men. Narrating about the peace settlement with Nizamshah, Viceroy D. Jeronimo Azevedo informed the Crown thus on 31st December 1614: Seeing the duration of the war and the trouble it is giving to the inhabitants of the North, so that if it was not brought to a speedy end, they will be completely ruined and exhausted, I thought how it could be remedied and peace be brought about, without letting it be known that this state sought it⁶⁹.

This letter exposes the helplessness of the Portuguese and shows that Malik Ambar was not at all afraid of them. On the contrary they had to respect and value Malik's rising power. There is another case revealing Malik's personality and the high status he had commanded by this time. The Portuguese had captured a ship of the Siddi of Danda to levy the duties on horses. Malik Ambar's letter to them in this context had its own effect and the Portuguese Captain soon released and restored the ship to its owner, though duties were to be paid later on⁷⁰. It shows that Malik Ambar had attained a great political position and his word was respected by all the powers of his time. When a Muslim Habshi was converted in Goa, an active interference was made by Adilshah's Ambassador to get him back as he was a Muslim⁷¹. These incidents show that the Portuguese were opposed in their designs by the neighbours whenever the latter felt offended.

There was an upheaval in political scenario in the west coast and the Deccan with the death of Malik Ambar in May

1626. Ibrahim Adilshah too died in September 1627 and Jahangir was succeeded by Shahjahan in 1628. However, Danda-Rajpuri with the entire district of Kolaba remained under Ahmadnagar rule till 1636, when the Kingdom of Nizamshah went under the control of Mughals. Mughal hold over the territory however was so lax that the entire area and coastal region with the exception of the territory around Danda-Rajpuri was occupied easily by Shahji Bhonsle, Shivaji's father. In 1636, Shahjahan had passed on Konkan to Adilshah of Bijapur and hence Chakan, Panvel, Chaul and Danda-Rajpuri also came under Adilshah. Shahaji Bhonsle who first served the Nizamshahi joined the court of Bijapur the next year. For smooth administration, Adilshah made two division of Konkan, the first being between Bhivandi and Nagothna with the headquarters at Kalyan, and the other from Nagothna to River Savitri under the Siddi of Janjira with the headquarters at Danda-Rajpuri. Siddi had agreed to govern the area on the condition to protect trade against the pirates and to safeguard the pilgrims to the holy city of Mecca. The Siddi in due course of time thrived and was raised to the position of Wazir. In accordance with the noble tradition of the Siddi community, it was also resolved that upon the death of the Wazir, the first officer of the fleet, and not the son of the deceased Wazir, was to succeed⁷². As early as 1618, an Abyssinian Siddi Surul Khan was the Governor of Danda-Rajpuri. He was succeeded by Siddi Yakut in 1620 and the next year, Yakut was succeeded by Siddi Ambar called as Sanak or the little, in contrast with the great Malik Ambar. Siddi Ambar seems to have been in power till 1648 when he was succeeded by Siddi Yusuf⁷³. He governed

till his death in 1655 when Adilshah appointed Fateh Khan* as Governor of Danda-Rajpuri. Whereas Grand Duff believed Fateh Khan was an Abyssinian, according to Khafi Khan and Farishta he was an Afghan who later constructed the fort of Janjira⁷⁴. But this does not appear to be true as Janjira fort had been already built there by the Siddis. What seems reasonable is that he strengthened the already existing fort of Janjira. After the death of Malik Ambar, his son Fateh Khan did continue war against the Mughals. But he lacked the great qualities and character of his father and his overbearing conduct also created a rift between the Habshis and the Deccanis, many of whom left him to join the Mughals. He also irritated the Marathas by his complicity in the killing of their Chief, Jadhav Rao and his family members. With the help of eunuch Hamid Khan or Jait Khan he tried to recover the fort of Ahmadnagar but was severely routed by the Mughal General, Khan Jahan Lodi, who, conceded him a reprieve on concessional condition on receipt of a considerable bribe. But in 1629 Sultan Murtaza Nizam Shah imprisoned Fateh Khan and appointed Hamid Khan in his place as his Prime Minister⁷⁵. Thus the descendants of African slaves gradually settled at various places in India and excelled so well as sailors, soldiers and administrators in the Deccan courts that they were the power to reckon with by the turn of the 17th century. Malik Ambar in particular gathered his countrymen through purchase or invitation in large numbers and gave boost to their careers. The Siddi nobles started procuring even the caffres of other

* This Fateh Khan is not the son of Malik Ambar.

parts of Africa and always felt proud as descendant of ancient Muslims. Malik Ambar himself acquired a very large number of slaves and got them educated and trained in various spheres of learning and administration. He was a religious man and showed great favours to Sufis and learned men and used to send sufficient money and clothes yearly to Hadramaut for the needy. He dedicated copies of the Quran at Tarim in Hadramaut and at Mecca. He had also purchased some houses at Mecca and Madina and endorsed them for those who recited them⁷⁶. He was a slave but an able man who carved out a place for himself in turbulent times. In warfare, command, judgement and administration, he had no equal. He grasped the warfare and politics with ease and managed the state affairs efficiently and effectively. He maintained his honoured status till the end and died with dignity. As many Abyssinians attained recognition, they gradually realised their own power and rose to unprecedented high positions in the coming years.

However, they had to face the formidable challenge of a new growing power --- the Marathas, who had taken up and upheld the common cause under the Yadavas of Devagiri and on account of their fighting spirit, extraordinary customs and traditions improved and polished by the religious reformers over the centuries were destined to attain glorious heights in the history of the country.

CHAPTER II

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CHAPTER III

Siddis versus Marathas with special reference to the Mughals' and the Portuguese diplomacy (1626-1680)

In the 16th century, Muslim population in South India was far less in comparison to what it was in the North. The Hindus did not lag behind there and rose to power occupying high offices in politics and during war time. By 1616, Malik Ambar while fighting the Mughals was in command of 40,000 horsemen, among whom were 10,000 young Habshis mounted on Persian horses but the number of the Marathas serving under him exceeded them. In 1620, Lakhji Yadav of Sindkhed and Shahaji Bhonsle fought against Prince Khurram (later Shahjahan) under the command of Malik Ambar who was defeated and had to retreat. But Shahaji kept on the pressure on the Mughal camp by his raids exhausting them. His bravery and military talents attracted the attention of Malik Ambar and he started receiving great honours at Nizamshahi court from time to time. After the death of Malik Ambar, his son Fateh Khan who succeeded him was found to be incompetent and inhuman. As a result, Hamid Khan, the new Abyssinian, a choice of Nizamshah wielded considerable authority and hence was a natural rival of Fateh Khan. With the help of his own wife, a woman of fascinating character, he had used immoral means to curry favour of the King. It was Hamid Khan who instigated Nizamshah to put Fateh Khan behind bars in the fort of Daulatabad. When the Mughals exerted tremendous pressure on ~~King~~ the nobles recommended him to induct Fateh Khan as his Prime Minister to tone up his administration. Later on, Shahjahan too demanded that he should be set free. Nizamshah ultimately

released him on 18th January 1631 and appointed him the Prime Minister. As fate would have it, Fateh Khan later on imprisoned the King who passed away in two months and the former was suspected to have had hand in his death¹.

As a matter of fact, the death of Malik Ambar had created a void in the political life of Deccan. The mantle of kingship of Bijapur had fallen on Mohammad Adilshah (1626-56). On account of the Mughal presence now, the Arabs, Persians and Afghans who on several occasions proved to be the backbone of the Kingdom were attracted towards the Mughals and they were absorbed in their army. The Deccanis and Abyssinians had derived a lot of strength and the clout at Ahmadnagar only during the time of Malik Ambar. Under these circumstances, the Marathas were fast rising in the military and political hierarchy in Bijapur. To cite an instance, an Adilshahi order asked Siddi Hasan, the District Officer of Karad, to hand over the Deshmukhi of Torale to Sambhaji Dharaji Mohite². After the ouster of the Yadava dynasty of Devguri by the Muslims, the Marathas had dispersed themselves to the south of Devguri settling down among the sturdy inhabitants on the mountains along the vast valleys which extend eastwards from the Sahyadri ranges into the Deccan plateau. Against such a social and adventurous background, in the beginning of the 17th century, Marathas were recruited with preferential treatment largely in the services of both Bijapur and Ahmadnagar. While fighting against Jahangir's son, Prince Parviz, Malik Ambar was reported to have headed 10,000 Maratha

horsemen. He knew their worth, guerilla tactics and mobilized them against the Mughal Prince who had to retreat with a defeat to Burhanpur³.

Given the credibility of the sturdy African slaves, their flow went on unabated as usual both into the kingdoms of Bijapur and Ahmadnagar. The African slaves very often used to flee from the Portuguese territories into the neighbouring areas falling under Muslim rule. Since the situation did not improve, the Portuguese Governor Nuno da Cunha had to sign the contract with Nizamshah, which stated that slaves of the Portuguese who fled to Cambay should be restored or be compensated for their prices. All the male or female slaves who had deserted the Portuguese masters were to be sold and the amount collected thereof was to be paid to their original owners⁴. Another contract between Nizamshah and the Viceroy Dom Garcia de Noronha signed on 22nd April 1539 stipulated that all the slaves who fled towards the regions of the Moors would be manumitted and those who neither turned Christians nor Muslims would be handed over to their owners⁵.

In the similar vein, the Governor Garcia de Sa also signed contract with Adilshah in 1548. In this adjustment, it was agreed that if the slaves of the Portuguese who slipped away into the territory of Adilshah were converted to Islamic faith, they would be sold and the price fetched would be handed over to their masters. Those who did not become Muslims would be delivered to their original owners⁶.

Despite the race against time, the situation did not change much even in the next century. Strange it might seem, there appear two main reasons why African slaves used to flee towards the Muslim ruled states. Firstly, they were treated there in a far better way than their brethren in Portuguese controlled territories and secondly, the Muslim states offered them several employment prospects including the recruitment in naval/army establishments and in which their forerunners with proven merits had shown superiority.

Now, after the release, Fateh Khan drew near Shahjahan in 1632 and secured part of old Jagir previously conceded to Shahji Bhonsle during the Maratha Chief's short subjection to the Mughals. Not to be outshone, Shahaji sought the help from Adilshah who sent a strong contingent to back the Maratha Chief in order to recapture Daulatabad from Fateh Khan. The Mughal General Mahabat Khan, realising that Fateh Khan would find it extremely difficult to cling on to the fort for long also rushed a large army. But in the meanwhile Fateh Khan regretting his action solicited for peace with Adilshah who had procured sufficient gun powder and other war material from the Portuguese and thus spared Fateh Khan and Nizamshahi for the time being⁷. However, by June 1633, Fateh Khan being short of provision was left with no other alternative than to surrender the fort of Daulatabad to the Mughals alongwith its rich hoard and magazine full of material. Consequently, the last Nizamshah was banished to Gwalior to spend rest of his life there. With the dissolution of Nizamshahi the local officers dispersed and settled down in various regions. For instance, Srinivasrao

migrated to Junnar, Siddi Saif Khan remained in Konkan, Siddi Ambar stuck to Janjira and Danda-Rajpuri, and Siddi Raihan stabilised himself at Sholapur. Shahaji Bhonsle on leaving Daulatabad for Bhimagarh in July 1633 occupied on his own all the Nizamshahi possessions from Poona and Chakan to Balaghat and attached the areas of Junnar, Ahmadnagar, Sangamner, Trimbak and Nasik to his acquisitions. He then formed a force of 7000 cavalry men and carried on raids all around. Mughals tried to lure Shahaji with very high position. But Shahaji who was a soldier with ambition and foresight did not accept the offer. On the contrary, he conspired against Mughals with Khawas Khan using Pundit Murari as intermediary. Shahaji felt that it did not matter much if one fort of Daulatabad out of 84 Nizamshahi forts was lost. Khavas Khan and other members of Bijapuri nobility backed Shahaji to induct in September 1633 a minor at Shahgarh, Murtaza Nizamshah II. Thus he administered on the lines of regency for 3 years, capturing forts and surrounding areas and conscripting troops. He as well as Murari solicited obeisance from Siddi Saif Khan of Tal-Konkan who headquartered at Kaliyan to the new king. The Siddi however, refused and preferred to join the court of Bijapur, relinquishing Tal-Konkan to Shahaji. The army of Shahaji clashed with Saif Khan's forces near Khed and in the wake of heavy losses on both sides, the Commander of the latter, Siddi Ambar Aish Khan, was hurt and held captive⁸.

Amidst all these, Adilshah had taken into possession several forts of Nizamshah including the regim of Chaul levying from Shahaji 3 lakh hon's. On the other hand, Siddi Raihan, a rebel General of Nizamshah annexed Sholapur region

which would yield 6 lakh hons. At another level, Rustam-i-Zaman (Randulla Khan), an Abyssinian General of Bijapur who was friendly with Shahaji, spearheaded the move against Khavas Khan who had been all powerful in the Adilshah Government and overthrew him in 1635⁹.

Inevitably, Shahaji's growing influence compelled Shahjahan to come down to the South again with a huge army to resume war against the former. Initially, Adilshah was on the side of Shahaji against the Mughal. But the circumstances necessitated him to pay a tribute of Rs.20 lakhs and concede to the Mughal suzerainty. In 1636, the possessions of Nizamshah were divided now between the two powers, the Mughals and Adilshah. Under another stipulation, Bijapur avowed war against Shahaji dispatching against him its best General, Randullah Khan. At this juncture, the Mughals too captured forts under Shahaji's control. The Maratha Sardar being helpless against the joint campaign, first withdrew to Danda-Rajpuri which was then under Siddi Ambar, an officer of Nizamshah, and after a few days departed to Muranjan and later, being hotly pursued, to Mahuli. During this interval, he helplessly sought shelter for himself and his family in the Portuguese fort of Chaul, but the State Council presided over by the Viceroy Pero da Silva at Goa in October 1636 directed the Captain of Chaul neither to show favour to Shahaji openly, nor give him shelter in the fort. But in case he desired to proceed to that of Danda, he and his family could be rendered assistance with due precaution by permitting them to embark the vessels¹⁰. /

The Portuguese at this time were facing a formidable challenge from the Dutch and the British. Hence they frantically tried to acquire the fort of Danda from Siddi Ambar who too had sought the backing from their Captain of Chaul against the impending attack from the Mughals whose ship which was presumed to have been lost was in his custody. The Captain had expressed his willingness to help Siddi as he almost appeared ready to hand over to him the fort of Danda. However, on 6th August 1637, the State Council at Goa instructed the Captain of Chaul to secure from Siddi a written declaration on handing over the fort as he could not be trusted for his oral assurances¹¹.

Closely related to this, it will be worthwhile to gauge the fate of the places passed over by Shahjahan to Adilshah's control. They included Chaul, Danda-Rajpuri, Chakan, Babal or Pabal. But unexpectedly, the Nizamshahi officers refused to surrender the forts. So Khan Dauran, Mughal General, was to seize Udgir which was held by one Siddi Miftan. After a prolonged siege of three months, the fort was handed over on 28th September 1636. The Siddi however was accommodated in services of Mughals under the title Habsh Khan¹².

A closer look at the proceedings of the State Council in Goa indicates that Siddi Ambar of Danda was a rebel defeated by his king, Adilshah in November 1640. The Siddi did dispatch his horses and cattles to the Captain of Chaul and was ready to give his fort also. However, owing to the shrewdness displayed by the Siddi and the turn taken by

politics of the time, the State Council at Goa appeared divided on 29th November, 1640 but finally resolved to take Danda and provide shelter to the Siddi secretly with brevity¹³. It appears that to take over Danda was on their priority list as on 2nd August 1641, the Viceroy João da Silva Telo de Meneses wrote to the Crown that the revenues accrued from Chaul were not sufficient enough even to repair its outer walls. Hence, he had planned to take over the fort of Danda from its Captain Siddi Ambar to thwart the Dutch attempt of acquiring the fort¹⁴. But the later events will show that the Siddi did not oblige them.

At this juncture, propitious situation was slowly emerging for the Marathas. By 1646, Shivaji, the Maratha hero and son of Shahaji had launched his marvellous career by securing the fort of Torna from Adilshah. The tremendous influence of his mother, Jijabai and his guardian and teacher Dadaji Konddeo shaped him into a chivalrous and daring soldier. Through his mother he inherited the lineage of Yadava rulers of Devguiri, and on paternal side he claimed lien from the brave Sisodias of Mewar. Later, Samarth Ramdas, the famous saint mentally prepared the young Shivaji for Swaraj or national regrowth, the very idea of which was in its embryonic state then¹⁵. Two years later, with the help of Maratha commandants Sodawlekar and Kodawlekar who were with Siddi, he could acquire Siddi's forts of Tala, Gosala and Rairi in Kolaba. The incidents sent signals of scare to the court of Bijapur. To check the advance of Shivaji, Adilshah sent strong contingents and his chiefs Dilwar Khan, Masud Khan, Ambar Khan, chiefs of Adoni, Farhad Khan, Khairat Khan,

Yakut Khan, Azam Khan, Bulbul Khan, Malik Raihan Khan, Ballal, son of Haybat Khan, Sidhoji, Mambaji Pawar, Mambaji Bhonsle, and some other nobles surrounded the camp of Shahaji Bhonsle in 1647¹⁶. Shahaji found himself helpless against such a vast force and had to surrender. This also forced Shivaji to return the recently captured forts to the Siddi of Janjira for the safety of his father, who was put under arrest¹⁷.

Shivaji kept a low profile for a couple of years, but he toured the Konkan districts and prepared systematically his future course of action. He had got acquainted with the methods adopted by the British to start a factory at Rajapur in 1648, by the Dutch at Vengurla about the same time and by the Portuguese who already settled at Chaul, Bassein and Salsete. He established amicable relations initially with all of them and even tried to be on good terms with the Siddis of Janjira, the only powerful Muslim ruler on the coast then. Presumably by 1653, the concept of Swaraj had already taken shape in his mind. And it is not surprising that for some years, Shivaji acted as his father's representative¹⁸. This was the time when Siddi Ambar did not have cordial relations with his master and was attacked by Adilshahi forces in the coming years. Hotly chased by Adilshah's forces in 1655, Ambar had finally sought refuge in the Portuguese fort of Chaul. The Portuguese Captain had shown willingness to grant shelter to Siddi's family and womenfolk as the similar courtesy had been extended to his father and grand-father, but the State Council presided over by Viceroy Dom Rodrigo da Silveira, Conde de Sarzedas resolved to deny the shelter as it did not like to disrupt

the existing peace with Adilshah and it felt it may cause an unwanted scandal¹⁹.

Now Siddi Fateh Khan became Governor of Janjira in 1655. At that time, there was a Majumdar of the fort named Avji Prabhu Chitre, who was serving there against his volition. During his tenure there when Fateh Khan fell ill and his condition worsened even despite the treatment by Firangi (Portuguese) doctors, some individuals who were jealous of Avji Prabhu poisoned the mind of the Siddi that his illness was caused by Avji's magical powers. Avji used to live then in Danda-Rajpuri. Siddi did not believe it, but was perturbed. He ordered to bring Avji with his wife and three children and directed his men to send them to Muscat as slaves. Either due to a storm or due to the strong will power of Avji's wife, the sailors brought them back for sale in the town of Rajpuri. Visaji Shankar, her brother, happened to be there as a good merchant. He purchased them in an auction without letting the sailors know that he had any relations with them. Visaji then wrote to Shivaji detailing the tragedy which disturbed Shivaji. He hated the Siddi as the latter used to enslave his people. After some years when Shivaji raided Rajpuri, he took Balaji, son of Avji Prabhu in his service as his private secretary and in future entrusted him with the fort of Rairi (Raigarh)²⁰. In 1656, Shivaji captured Rairi while fighting against the Mores of Javli. Both the sons of the late Chandra Rao More who had died in the battle against Shivaji, with several womenfolk of the family had taken shelter in the Rairi fort which was almost inaccessible. While Raghunath Ballal effected the

siege of Rairi, Shivaji himself went down into Konkan causing ravage which created panic in the camp of the new Governor Siddi Fateh Khan. He therefore opted for amity with Shivaji by handing over to him the forts of Tala, Gosala and Rairi. Shivaji's further rapid rise was unrivalled in Indian history. He went on acquiring Kalyan and Bhivandi, Mahuli, Panvel and Bassein ports from the Bijapuri officer Mulla Ahmad. He had earlier seized Birvadi, Bhurap or Sudhagad near Roha and Kangori near Mahad. During these latest forays, he came in the direct conflict with the Siddis of Janjira who had to give up ultimately the eastern half of the Konkan to Shivaji²¹.

It has now been increasingly recognised that at this juncture, the Portuguese were not as all powerful as they used to be in the preceding century. Bombay, once in their possession, had been gifted to Charles II as part of the dowry of his queen, Princess Catherine. And with the sparsely populated island passing over to the East India Company in the year 1665, the British power in the Indian Ocean grew considerably in the coming years²². Another strong authority in the vicinity was that of Sardesai of Kudal, the chieftain of Savantwadi, Khem Sawant Bhonsle who had been the feudatory of Adilshah but had proclaimed independence in 1627. He was succeeded by Soma Sawant in 1640 and he in turn by Lakham Sawant in the same year. When Shivaji had taken possession of his territory in 1650, he had tendered his allegiance to Shivaji whereby he became Sardesai of the entire South Konkan. The Sawants had their own fleet at their strategic port of Vengurla where the Dutch also had opened a factory²³. Shivaji after garrisoning Rairi went

downwards to Rajapur to render help to Lakham Sawant then facing the onslaught of Bijapuri General Rustam-i-Zaman²⁴.

He also rushed a strong force under the Peshwa Samrajpant in 1659 to exert pressure on Siddi Fateh Khan but the Siddi bravely defeated them. Shivaji did replenish his contingent under Raghunath Pant, but in 1660 the Siddi proved not only his strength but also achieved a great success²⁵. However, amidst all this, to the chagrin of Lakham Sawant, he had to give up his half territory in 1659 to Shivaji. Small wonder then, Lakham Sawant turned to Adilshah to be his vassal once again and backed the Siddi against Shivaji. The Marathas under Shivaji surprised all the adversaries including all foreigners as he displayed his uncommon and unique statesmanship and single handedly fought against all of them --- the Mughals, Siddis, Bijapuris, Sawants. After seizing Kalyan and Bhivandi, he realised that without raising his own navy, a step ignored by the Indian potentates then, he would not be able to counter the foreigners with ease as well as face the Siddi's formidable navy. The Portuguese were alarmed with the new strategy of Shivaji who had already got built some ships. Hence they vowed not to allow Maratha ships venture on the western coast²⁶. It also created an awkward situation for the British who had either to aid the Siddis or profess neutrality or pledge help to Shivaji depending upon the prevailing circumstances as they were to prove their worth as the best business dealers of the time.

An inevitable consequence of these development led the Portuguese to be more apprehensive about Shivaji's victory against the Siddi and their own possessions in North Bassein and Chaul which were bordering on Shivaji's

territories. In 1659, Shivaji's fleet of 20 vessels seized Danda, with the help of 300 Portuguese deserters and Africans under the command of Rui Leitão Viegas, formerly from Portuguese army. To counteract this disturbing move of Shivaji, the State Council at Goa resolved to help the Siddi, secretly²⁷. The constant clashes between the contingents of the Siddi and Shivaji went unabated in which the latter succeeded to a great extent to annex Siddi's territories upto Danda. Shivaji's unexpected success over Afzal Khan, the General of Bijapur whom he stabbed to death in a daring action was watched by the Portuguese and English with awe²⁸. Shivaji then ordered Anaji Datto to capture Panhala, the capital of the western Adilshahi district. By 28th November 1659, Panhala and the adjoining regions of Kolhapur, Vasantgarh, Khelna (Vishalgarh), Rangna and other fortresses were seized. Shivaji inflicted defeats on Rustam-i-Zaman, Fazl Khan and other nobles and he chased them almost upto to the precincts of the capital, Bijapur. On his return, he pillaged the towns of Raibag, Gadag and Lakameshvar, and came back to Raigarh by January 1660²⁹.

To defuse the critical situation, Adilshah then invited Siddi Jauhar, Viceroy of Karnool, honoured him with the title of Salabat Khan and deputed him against Shivaji with Baji Ghorapade, Rustam-i-Zaman, Fazl Khan, Sadat Khan and several others. Besides, the Siddi of Janjira and the Sawant of Wadi too replenished the strategy. In Panhala, Kodtaji Gujar and Sarnaubat, Netaji Palkar took defensive measures under the direct supervision of Shivaji. Palkar alongwith Siddi Hilal, swooped on Jauhar's army. It may be recalled that Siddi Hilal had joined Shivaji after Afzal Khan's death. But as fate could have it, despite the joint brave front they

faced the rout as well as the death of Siddi Hilal's son Vahvah. However, Shivaji taking advantage of darkness slipped to Vishalgarh on the night of 13th July 1660. But he was chased all along by Fadal Khan and Siddi Hilal who was reputed to be faithful to any ruler and had changed the side. At this crucial moment of deep crisis, Baji Prabhu Deshpande of Hirdas Maval, stationed by Shivaji in a defile near the fort, blocked the Siddi's force till Shivaji entered into Vishalgarh at the cost of his life³⁰. Some historians hold the view that there was a sort of perfidious alignment between Siddi Jauhar and Shivaji and Adilshah had realised that. However, the fact remains that the Siddi's forces were continuously annoyed by the Maratha depredations which had laid waste the territories around. But the Siddi of Janjira soon recovered his losses during the period.

Shivaji, next year mustered his entire force against Fateh Khan, and Siddis were repulsed inspite of foul weather. The new commander Vyankoji Datto went on a rampage recklessly in the Siddi's territory creating terror. The Siddi therefore pleaded for peace and lost Danda-Rajpuri to Shivaji while simultaneously Janjira itself was the strong target of attack. Subsequently, Shivaji fortified the hill along the fort of Janjira and constructed row of small and big fortresses such as Birvadi and Lingamagarh near Raigarh to curb the forays of Siddi on the coast³¹.

Even otherwise the Siddi now was left with only the sea-fort of Janjira and had to pull on with plunder. On the other hand by 1659, Shivaji had already become the suzerain of the area stretching as far as to the southern border of

the Satara region upghats and from Mahuli to Mahad in Konkan. With the exception of the areas and contiguous territories on the west coast in possession of Bijapur, the Siddis and the Portuguese, he was virtually the master of the entire north Konkan region including the far north area of Thana. While by this time the number of forts, old and new --- acquired or newly raised had risen upto forty³², the region from Mahad downwards in the South was still out of his control.

Faced with this complex situation, it was but natural that the peace with the Siddi was not be lasting as the forfeiture of territories was fraught with total starvation for him. On the other hand, to seize Janjira by all means formed one of the main objectives of ambitious Shivaji. As the Siddi resumed in desperation his pillaging activities on the west coast for survival, it led to fresh outbreak of the war. Significantly, Adilshah too tried in 1663 to regain what he had let slip in Shivaji's hands. The end result of all this was the joint action of Khawas Khan, Savant of Wadi and the Siddi against Shivaji in October 1664, in which not only Siddi Sarwar along with other brave officers was slain, but Shivaji too had to withdraw after the heavy loss of 400 men³³.

Against this backdrop Aurangzeb who had ascended the throne in 1656 had consolidated his position in north India, and now turned his attention to the Deccan where he had been stationed as Viceroy during his father, Shahjahan's time. His General Shaista Khan in 1660 had occupied Chakan and one Kar Talab Khan, an Uzbeg, stormed Konkan. But Shivaji, swiftly reached the scene and blockaded their routes of

advance and retreat leading Kar Talab with no alternative than to surrender and beat a hasty retreat. But in May 1661, the Mughals captured Kalyan and Mahad and caused heavy losses to Maratha forces near Pen. Shivaji thus could retain only Ratnagiri and an insignificant section of southern Kolaba³⁴. Nevertheless his clashes against the Mughals continued in 1662. He had established a good rapport with the Portuguese at this crucial moment and they too responded with great secrecy not allowing any foodstuff to the Mughal army³⁵. In April, 1663, it may be recalled, Shivaji masterminded his well-known night assault on Shaista Khan, enhancing his prestige in the eyes of the people³⁶. The next month, Shivaji descended to Vengurla but returned soon stationing there 200 armed personnel. The Portuguese at Goa were alarmed and the Viceroy, Autonio de Melo e Castro wrote to Mohammad Khan, Havaldar of Konkan, thus: "I have received the news that Shivaji is in Konkan and have taken precautions with the help of Portuguese and 4000 natives to save the island. However, I do not feel Shivaji will attack because he is fighting the Mughal. How will he break with me and Adilshah at the same time"³⁷. The letter shows that the Portuguese were yet not fully convinced that how the brain of Shivaji worked like that of Napoleen. But the British had understood him fairly well. A letter dated 26th November 1664 written from Surat to the authorities in London informs: "... the news has made Shivaji an airy body and added wings or else it would be impossible that he could be at so many places at one and the same time he reigns victoriously and uncontrolled, is a terror to all kings and princes

exercises his men in a way that he flyes to and fro with incredible dexterity³⁸. Later in the same year, Shivaji amassed an army near Kalyan and another contingent he collected near Danda-Rajpuri and gave the impression that he either meant to storm the Portuguese at Bassein and Chaul or to force the Siddi to subdue. However, his main object was the distant Surat, the wealthiest sea-port on the west coast which he ransacked and looted during 6th-10th January, 1664³⁹. This pillage enhanced his prestige further. Curiously, the Portuguese Viceroy, Antonio de Melo e Castro was quick to dispatch congratulations to Shivaji for this great achievement⁴⁰.

It is of great significance that ever since Shivaji seized Danda-Rajpuri, he had been launching every year the raid against the fortified island of Janjira⁴¹. Simultaneously he used to strike at his other enemies as well. When the forces of Bijapur clashed vehemently with Shivaji's forces in 1664 to regain the southern part of Konkan, he swooped upon them all of a sudden, inflicted a severe defeat on them and then proceeded to burn Vengurla⁴². On replenishing his fleet, in February 1665 he personally launched a plundering attack on Basrur as his fleet was not to be intercepted or blockaded by the Portuguese in Goa. This was followed by the clashes with a very strong Mughal contingent under Jai Singh who annexed some of his possessions. But when Shivaji continued to fight undeterred on land and sea plundering some Mughal vessels going to Mecca for pilgrimage, Jai Singh sought the aid of Siddi Sambal of

Janjira with an assurance of a Mansab. Later on, Siddi Sambal fought on the Mughal side against the Adilshah. In the process, Shivaji unwillingly had to withdraw from all the lands and 27 forts seized from the Mughals. But he could retain with him the possession in the south Konkan. Shivaji now laid a claim on the possession of Janjira and the Raja Jai Singh and Diler Khan were inclined to consider his demand but Siddi Sambal refused to hand it over unless he received an imperial order. Shivaji too demurred to abide by accord to hand over the 27 forts but was finally induced by Jai Singh to personally insist upon Janjira in his proposed meeting with Aurangzeb⁴³. But this recently concluded treaty of Purandar (1665) with Jai Singh was rather an agreement between the Mughals and the Marathas for the partition of Bijapuri Kingdom between them.

Contrary to appearances, the Portuguese were diplomatically helping Shivaji. Even during the anti-Shivaji campaign of Jai Singh, the Portuguese Viceroy, Dom Antonio de Mello e Castro blamed Lodi Khan in 1664 for the disruption of peace between the Mughals and the Portuguese clarifying that some Portuguese deserters were found even in Golkonda, Karnataka, Bijapur and Mughal territory and he could do nothing in that regard if some had joined Shivaji's service earlier⁴⁴.

An order dated 18th April, 1665 from the Viceroy directing the Captain of the Northern Province throws better light on their attitude: ".... deal with them (the Mughals) with great prudence so that we should neither give them

occasion to break with us, nor should we show that we doubt them, and because all their complaints are born out of their imagination that we favour Shivaji, you should order that nothing should be done from which they could feel this suspicion. However, if without this risk you could secretly give any aid with munitions or foodstuffs to Shivaji, you should do it for money as it is not desirable that if he is driven out from his lands, the Mughal becomes the lord of them. But do it with great care so that none suspects. To Shivaji, write how much better it is for him and for us that his retreat, in case it becomes unavoidable, should not be to Chaul, but to Goa, where he would be more safe⁴⁵.

The Portuguese certainly preferred a weak neighbour and thus helped the weak against the powerful one. The Viceroy Antonio de Mello e Castro while writing to the Crown on 7th December 1665 mentioned that a captain of Adilshah, called Kawas Khan, had camped near Portuguese lands with 2000 horsemen and a huge infantry. Shivaji suddenly ran through his lands, forced him to give up Konkan and then entered deep into the interior and went right upto a short distance from his court. The Viceroy believed that Adilshah's own officers were in league with Shivaji and were destroying his kingdom for personal gains. Both had sent their envoys to him seeking alliance. But since it was not good for the Portuguese Crown to unite with any one, he was agreeing with them for some petty concessions for maintaining good relations in order to keep each of them afraid of the other⁴⁶. The letter is a clear indication that the

Portuguese were happy to maintain their Estado da India safe by dividing their enemies and they did take special interest in making all the neighbours weaker.

In the meanwhile, Shivaji visited the Mughal Court at Agra upon the personal assurance from Jai Singh of his safety there. He certainly had Janjira in mind. Aurangzeb, however, imprisoned Shivaji and soon removed him from the care of Jai Singh's son and posted a new guard to be supervised directly by the city Kotwal, Siddi Faulad Khan, a trustworthy, honest and loyal servant of the Emperor. The Siddi had taken all the precautions including placement of artillery round Shivaji's mansion so that he did not escape⁴⁷. Shivaji came to know the real intention of Aurangzeb who had planned to get rid of him. There is a letter of 16th May 1666 of Vakil Parkdas addressed to Diwan Kalyandas explaining that the Emperor had decided to hand over Shivaji to Siddi Faulad Khan, Kotwal, for his execution⁴⁸.

Shivaji then meticulously chalked out his future course of action and managed to slip out of the death trap in Agra in a great escapade. He however could not forget that he was under the strict check of a Siddi even in the North. After his return to the homeland in December 1667, Shivaji offered peace to the Mughals frequently in order to gain time to spruce up his administration and thus consolidated his power. In the meanwhile, Jai Singh had been recalled by Aurangzeb but he died on his way in July 1667. During Shivaji's absence, Annaji Datto had charge of Dabhol province, Moro Pingle of Rajpuri and Raigarh and Abhaji Sondev of

Kalyan province. Shivaji harassed Mughals whenever opportunity arose but did not spare the Sawants of Wadi and pressed them so hard that they had to seek shelter in the Portuguese territories. He complained to the Portuguese, who politely informed him in November 1667 that the Sawants were vassals of Adilshah with whom their State was in peace. And though they were to be given due protection, they would not be allowed to leave the Portuguese State to create troubles in Shivaji's lands⁴⁹. Shivaji too desired peace with the Portuguese at this juncture as he had to reorganise his power and concluded a treaty of peace and friendship with them in December, 1667⁵⁰. By now, the Portuguese had realised the facets of Shivaji's brilliant personality and it is reflected in a letter written by the Viceroy to His Majesty. The Viceroy compared Shivaji's astuteness, valour and military prudence with those of Caesar and Alexander as he found Shivaji everywhere, having no certain place, and appearing with millions of people in his army⁵¹.

As expected, in 1667 as well Shivaji resumed his yearly campaign against the Siddi Fateh Khan of Janjira, who had also experienced by then that Adilshah was no more in a position to save him from Shivaji. Shrewed as he was, he turned towards the Portuguese and became their feudatory in 1668⁵². Thus the Portuguese again pretended to be friendly with both the enemies. In early 1669, Shivaji therefore intensified his attack against Janjira. The Siddi was cornered and as expected approached the Portuguese for help. The Viceroy in May 1669 decided to help him by sending

soldiers and war materials under the garb of feudatoryship and wrote to his Captain in the North "to do whatever was possible because Shivaji, as a neighbour, would prove more harmful. In case the Siddi offered the fort, he should take and garrison it adequately"⁵³. By October, Siddi's condition was reported to be so precarious and worsened that he wrote to the British, in the neighbourhood that he had decided to hold on till last and then pass on the fort to the Mughals⁵⁴.

It was at this critical juncture that the Portuguese aid to the Siddi arrived and saved Janjira from the onslaught of Shivaji. This was followed on 6th February 1670 by a treaty of peace and friendship concluded between the Siddi with the Portuguese, and soon the Viceroy passed orders to his Captain of Chaul to send all help to the Siddi⁵⁵. This was resented vehemently by Shivaji by deputing his envoy Vithal Pundit to Goa for further negotiations in this regard.

The main point put forth by the Maratha envoy was "the Portuguese will not give any help in any way to the Siddi and orders will be issued in this regard to the Portuguese captains in the North". With hesitation, the Portuguese assured that they would not help the Siddi in future and finally a treaty was signed with Shivaji on 10th February 1670. Under this treaty, the Portuguese agreed to maintain the friendship and both the parties were to restore each other's vessels, goods etc. captured earlier, but their main contention about the Siddi was that as the Siddi was a feudatory of the King of Portugal, the Governors were bound to defend him in need and this was not possible to be fulfilled without offending the friendship of Shivaji. Hence

they proposed that they would mediate to bring about a peace accord between the two warring forces⁵⁶.

Practically, both the parties didn't take the treaty seriously. While the parleys for the treaty were in progress, Shivaji's replenished forces were continuing attacks to capture Janjira. As he mounted pressure with all his resources, the Siddi's strategic plan collapsed as he could not get timely help from the Portuguese. Being exhausted by the continuous struggle, he decided to part with Janjira to Shivaji in compensation of a rich Jagir. But his three Abyssinian slaves -- Sambal, Kasim and Khairiyat --- instigated their kinsmen on the island against the move of subjugation and put Fateh Khan behind bars. The two brothers Kasim and Khairiyat gave up their own demands for the seat of power in the interest of Siddi Sambal, who was ultimately nominated Governor. He sought the aid from Adilshah and the Mughal Viceroy of Deccan. While Adilshah did not respond, the Mughal General heeded his request. Predictably, Siddi Sambal changed his obeisance to Aurangzeb, secured his Admiralty and a Mansab in addition to a Jagir fetching Rs.3 lakhs per year. Kasim and Khairiyat were given commanderships of Janjira and Danda-Rajpuri respectively and their large fleet finally joined the Mughal service. From then onwards the title of Yakut Khan was conferred on the first Siddi Admiral, a practice which was continued in the cases of successive Admirals. On November 1670, Shivaji with Daria Sarang as his Admiral heading a big fleet backed by a large army planned to seize Surat by army while his navy would attack simultaneously. This did not materialise but he sacked Surat

again in the same year and returned with immense pillage in cash and kind. In January of the next year, the Mughal Governor Khan Jahan having joined the navy of the Siddi intercepted Shivaji's ships anchoring off the fort of Danda-Rajpuri and seized them with 200 men aboard, 100 of whom were Marathas whose feet were tied by Siddi with heavy stones and pushed them off the board⁵⁷.

Once on the scene Shivaji was not ready to take such insults lightly. He personally reorganised the assault on Janjira. The Siddi again clamoured for help from the Portuguese. Captain of Chaul sent repeated messages to Goa on the impending danger and did help the Siddi. This is reflected in the State Council resolution of 15th March 1671 which specified to help the Siddi by supplying war materials during the night with great care in order to keep off a dangerous neighbour like Shivaji in the vicinity⁵⁸. Siddi's plight at this time was precarious as he had no balance money to pay his forces. The Portuguese again provided him with ammunitions and Rs.2000 secretly prior to monsoon of 1671. The Siddi's fort was of great utility for the Portuguese to safeguard their possessions and they not only supplied money, provisions, artillery pieces to the Siddi but soldiers as well⁵⁹.

Just as Shivaji was extremely keen on possessing Janjira, the Siddis were also desperate to regain Danda-Rajpuri. In 1671, when the Maratha garrison at Danda-Rajpuri was revelling in Holi festival, Siddi Qassim known for his extraordinary bravery secretly arrived in a fleet of 40 ships, while Siddi Khairiyat with 500-strong contingent

courageously dared to slip in the area from the land side. When almost the entire garrison scurried to reverse Khairiyat's sudden foray. This opportunity was seized by Qassim to scale the sea walls. Though several of his men were pushed back into the sea and some killed, the remaining effected them into the fort with great efforts. In the ensuing battle, Qassim went on slaying spree and joined Khairiyat, finally regaining Danda-Rajpuri. The absence of Shivaji on the scene that night also cost him 6 other neighbouring forts as well. The garrison at seventh fort offered a strong resistance but ultimately surrendered on the promise of safety. But the Siddi transgressed the agreement, enslaved them and converted the pretty women to the Islamic faith and ultimately slew all the men⁶⁰.

Towards the end of 1672, Aurangzeb dispatched again a strong fleet from Surat to diminish the power of Shivaji and the Siddi too troubled subjects on the coastal region under Shivaji, set afire big ships at Kelsi and looted his several vessels and port towns including Dabhol⁶¹. During these attacks, Shivaji's men were provided shelter by the Portuguese Captain at Chaul and Shivaji duly thanked the captain for his kind gesture. Pretending that his men had no knowledge of marine manoeuvres, he tried to induce the captain with offers of money and even showed willingness to become the vassal of the Portuguese King for enfeebling the authority of the Siddi of Janjira. The Portuguese Viceroy was overjoyed when heard about the unexpected offer and broke the great news to the King in Portugal on 19th January

1673⁶². However, the King looked at the offer with skepticism. In a letter of 26th July 1674, he wrote back to the Viceroy that what Shivaji offered to the Captain of Chaul should be examined carefully by himself with great precaution, in the light of the designs of the Maratha Chief⁶³.

In reality, Shivaji was resourceless in view of the big, modern and well equipped fleet of the Siddi anchored surrounding the castle⁶⁴. For Shivaji, regaining Danda was the political need without which he could not have sway over the sea front.

Tracing the course of developments in British occupied arena, the Siddi having now enjoyed royal Admiralty started spending winter in Bombay annually. The British hosted him despite Shivaji's threats. In 1673, contrary to popular perception, the envoys of both Shivaji and the Siddi tried to get British backing against each other. At this, the British were in a fix because if they would not provide facilities to the Siddi in Bombay, his set-ups in Mughal areas would invite danger. They could not dismiss Shivaji's plea because for the supply of foodgrains and wood they depended on his territories. Inevitably, they were impelled to maintain neutrality and did all sorts of dilly-dallying to please both of them⁶⁵.

Worse still, Siddi Sambal had behaved rashly with the British Chief in Bombay, Augier who being helpless could do nothing than to listen. Further his men indulged in violent

activities in Shivaji's lands inviting strong protests from Shivaji who contended that the food supply procured by the British from his regions used to be diverted to the advantage of Siddi. The British too communicated their grouse against Siddi to their higher authorities at Surat. But it led to naught. Shivaji had wished that the British should secretly sell him the war material. But the British viewed that if they were to help Shivaji, he would derive unimaginable advantage from it. Shivaji on the other hand, took a lenient stand against the British with the fear that they would join the enemy camp. It is then no matter of surprise that as an alternative he turned towards the Dutch who expressed their willingness to back him with their 22-ship fleet for regaining Danda. Shivaji on the other hand assured the Dutch that he could dispatch 3000 soldiers to support Dutch in their attempt to capture Bombay⁶⁶.

Yet, Shivaji had no faith in the Dutch but he maintained amity with the British. Surprisingly, in August 1673, he even managed to procure guns and lead from the French⁶⁷.

However, the genuine reason not to deny sanctuary to the Siddi in Bombay by the British appears to be the much needed supply of beef which the Siddi provided them⁶⁸.

As in the previous years, the next year too, Siddi's men came to Bombay uninformed in October, sailed along the river side regions of Shivaji, Pen and Nagothna, devastated the region causing considerable bloodshed and enslaved

several women and children for their eventual sale. Augier unhappy over the episode reproved the Governor of Surat as well as the Siddi whom the Portuguese had already stopped the provision of foodstuffs from Salsete. The Siddis however continued their ravages until a well-armed Maratha force from Raigarh swooped upon them while harvesting the paddy fields, slew 100 of them and took away their heads to Shivaji⁶⁹.

Shivaji on the other hand continued his depredations into the Mughal region and defeated Mughal generals very often. In 1672 he had laid claim for 'Chauth' from Surat. In the aftermath of the tribal uprising in the north-west frontier, Aurangzeb had to divert a section of the Mughal army from the Deccan to that area. Shivaji therefore took advantage of the situation and started exacting exorbitant amount from the Mughal areas. In March 1674, he also ordered Daulat Khan in Satavli river to counter the Siddi Sambal's fleet. In this violent naval clash, Siddi suffered more losses than Daulat Khan. While the Siddi retreated to Harishwar port, 21 miles away to the south of Janjira, Shivaji, celebrated his coronation with great pomp and splendour on 16th June 1674 at Raigarh assuming the title of Chhatrapati. After monsoon, Shivaji sent Moro Pant to Kalyan with a large army of 10,000 men and claimed Chauth from the Portuguese at Bassein. He further beefed up these forces and ordered their march towards Junnar and ravaged the entire coast from South Konkan upto Bardez, and in February 1675, he returned to Raigarh⁷⁰. In the following month, with 15,000 cavalry, 14,000 infantry and 10,000 well equipped pioneers,

Shivaji came down to Rajapur in the vicinity of Siddi's bastion and halted there for three days. He sent 40 small vessels to sail towards Vengurla urgently and himself marched towards the town of Kudal and in April invested Phonda. Simultaneously, another strong army contingent pillaged Atgiri and two other main towns near Hyderabad taking away a good deal of amount as well as moneyed people as ransom. At this juncture, the Portuguese maintained neutrality, but secretly aided Bijapur not to allow Shivaji to come anywhere near in the neighbourhood. Shivaji however, blocked the Portuguese supply, and the fort of Phonda was seized by May 1675 though Quiledar, Muhammad Khan defended it heroically and finally saved his life by offering to Shivaji Ankola, Shiveshwar, Karwar and Kadra which were under Bijapur. Besides, the region down southwards upto Gangavati river also came into his possession⁷¹.

Encouraged by the new acquisitions, Shivaji now planned in September 1675, a joint land and sea assault against Siddi. He had augmented his fleet considerably to face Siddi. The fleet of the latter also was very active on the coast upto Vengurla. Shivaji's squadrons from Gheria (Vijaydurg) and Rajapur retaliated but Siddi's fleet slipped to Janjira which had been under siege by the strong Maratha forces in the absence of Siddi Sambal who was away in Surat. It was only when he returned with his fleet, the Marathas were forced to lift the siege. But they besieged Janjira once again more vigorously next year. In August 1676 Moro Pant Peshwa with big army of 10,000 men came to the Janjira coast to support the fleet, by raising floating

platforms for batteries in order to bombard the fort walls. But the timely arrival of Siddi Qassim's fleet on the scene scuttled the well planned strategy of Marathas forcing them to retreat raising the siege⁷². However, Shivaji in the same year seized Gingee (Gingi) and Vellore from the Bijapur ruler. Consequently, he soon augmented the garrison in these and other fortresses in order to face the suspended Mughal attack⁷³.

Strange it might seem, the Mughals at this time were not happy with Siddi Sambal. On account of some deceitful conduct of Siddi Sambal, a royal order was issued to him in early 1677 to hand over the whole imperial fleet to Siddi Qassim. Unexpectedly, Siddi Sambal disobeyed and clashed against Qassim in Bombay waters. The British mediated and proposed that Sambal's family confined at Janjira by Qassim should be restored to him, and one of the Mughal vessels should be kept under his command. But it was not acceptable to Sambal who later felt so irritated with the proceedings at Janjira that Shivaji could easily lure him. Siddi Sambal and his nephew Siddi Misri offered his services to Shivaji. From November 1677 to March 1678 Qassim sailed along the coast harassing Shivaji's subjects and returned to Bombay during monsoon. At this Shivaji retaliated and sent Daulat Khan and Daria Sarang with 4000 men to Panvel in July 1678 with instructions to cross the creek and burn the Siddi's fleet stationed at Mazagaon in Bombay. However, the violent monsoon and paucity of boats came in their way. As a last resort, he attempted to seek entry into Bombay through the

Portuguese territory. The Portuguese flatly refused it, and even closed the pass of Thana⁷⁴.

As a matter of fact, while Qassim was planning to winter at Bombay, the British had very tough time in dealing with him on account of their great stakes at Surat on one hand and the danger of cut in supply of provisions from Shivaji's lands on the other. However, the British yielded to Siddi Qassim and allowed his fleet to anchor at Bombay during winter. They also took all the precautionary steps to withstand the expected Maratha threat and had hinted the Siddi to leave the port in the event of Shivaji's retaliation. They even paid the Siddi Rs.2,000/- for the purpose, which was repayable in Surat by the Mughal Governor.

This action by the British instilled a fear in the minds of the Portuguese as well as they were scared of the proximity of Shivaji's forces at Kalyan. Since the Portuguese denied the Maratha the entry through their area much needed pass at Thana, Daulat Khan's men in retaliation set afire two or three Portuguese occupied hamlets⁷⁵.

It was but natural that Shivaji was unhappy with Daulat Khan's vain attempt as the Siddi had returned to Janjira unscathed. Left with no alternative, Shivaji then chose Khanderi, a small rocky island about 18 kms. south of Bombay and 48 kms. north of Janjira and on 15th September 1679 occupied it. This unimaginined action brought the British and the Siddi together to oust him from the island of Khanderi. The plea from the Deputy Governor of Bombay to the garrison chief Nal Nayak to leave the island was rejected in the absence of the instructions from Shivaji. This naturally

led to the first clash between the Marathas and the British on 19th September which ended in a serious setback for the latter, in which action many Englishmen were imprisoned and two Shibars were seized. The second encounter took place next month on 18th October 1679 when the entire Maratha fleet of over 60 ships under the command of Daulat Khan suddenly pounced upon the small British squadron and captured the Ghurab, Dowe. But the forceful retaliation by the British squadron, the entire Maratha fleet had to flee to the bar of Nagothna. The Siddi's fleet of 34 ships joined the English at the end of November and daily pounded against Khanderi. But the English merchants, feeling the pinch of the great cost involved in these operations withdrew and left the unfinished job of repelling Shivaji's forces on the Portuguese Governor of Bassein and the Siddi. Shivaji being peeved over the heavy battering of his fleet near Khanderi, sent 4000 men to Kalyan and Bhivandi with instructions to land in Bombay en route Thana. But, the Portuguese Governor of Bassein denied them entry through his area. The Marathas then headed towards Panvel in order to embark there on seven Shibars. The inhabitants of the area being greatly uneasy, the English were not keen to continue the hostilities. And the English ships finally left Khanderi in January 1680. But the Siddi was not to give up easily. He occupied Underi, a small island near Khanderi, fortified it and tried to counter attack the Marathas stationed at Thal nearby. Daulat Khan with his fleet tried in vain to secure Underi on two occasions and suffered heavy losses in vessels. The Siddi on the other hand lost only 4 men, but no vessel⁷⁶. Expectedly,

the Portuguese Viceroy sent congratulations to the Siddi in a letter dated 28th February 1680 for his victory over Underi, Khanderi. He also assured the Siddi some artillery pieces from Chaul and all the necessary help so as to prevent the fort of Danda falling in the hands of Shivaji. However, the Viceroy also stressed that it was not fair that while maintaining good relations his (Siddi's) men were entering into the rivers falling under the Portuguese and causing damages in the territories of Shivaji⁷⁷.

It is of great significance that the Portuguese fully supported the Siddis and the British in their move to evict Shivaji from Khanderi. They even had kept ready 2 frigates and 2 galliots to be sent to Bombay from Bassein for the purpose but later left the matter to the Siddis and the British⁷⁸. Theirs was a decadent power and they were anxious only to hold on to their existing territories avoiding armed encounters with any other State by entering into friendly relations or diplomacy. They went on welcoming Shivaji's envoys in Goa showing every courtesy for a fresh treaty of friendship and at the same time encouraged the Siddi by assuring him their help⁷⁹. They also let the powers fight against their own enemies and always supported the weaker neighbour as a buffer against the powerful enemy. The letter dated 15th October 1679 of Essaji Patekar, Captain-in-Chief of Pargana Panchana in Bassein written to the Portuguese King discloses that his father and grand-father had shed their blood fighting against Nizamshah while defending Chaul for the Portuguese. The Viceroy's letter to His Majesty

mentions that Patekar had done the similar service in the defence of Asherim (Serra de Asserim) forcing the Marathas to raise the siege and requested that he be granted more villages, he being the best Hindu Chief siding the Portuguese against Shivaji. He further added that Essaji could not be so effective with merely 200 men and 20 horses at his disposal⁸⁰. Thus, the Portuguese did everything, whatever was possible to save themselves from Shivaji and always avoided an armed encounter with him. The Viceroy's directive to the General of the North, João de Mello de Sampaio, not to declare himself against Shivaji and avoid the invitation of the British and the Siddis by excusing himself of the peace the Portuguese had with the Maratha Chief, clearly indicates that they had in mind only diplomatic means to deal with Shivaji. The Viceroy further instructed the General to favour the British by supplying them their requirements but at the same time he was advised not to displease Shivaji⁸¹. The supply requirements of the British were scanty and the offers advanced by Shivaji made the British to have an honourable peace which had been negotiated and agreed in early 1680. The garrisoning of Khanderi and seizure of the Dwe were the last accomplishments of the Maratha navy prior to Shivaji's death which occurred at Raigarh on 3rd April 1680⁸². With the news of Shivaji's death, the Portuguese Viceroy Francisco de Tavora, Conde de Alvor also suspended all the hostilities against the Marathas⁸³.

Shivaji's most outstanding accomplishment was of uniting the scattered Marathas in the Deccan region into a formidable and powerful nation in the face of four great

rival powers --- Mughals, Bijapuris, Portuguese and the Siddis of Janjira. He annexed a large portion of the Bijapuri Kingdom, forced Qutbshah to pay him tributes, humbled Aurangzeb rocking his empire and challenged all the European powers. But one is perplexed to note his failure in seizing Janjira despite his several serious bids during his life time. How desperate he was to capture Janjira has been shown in the preceding account. His masterly planning and superb execution, combined with daring actions were comparable to those of Napolean Bonaparte. But his marvellous victories were overshadowed by this sole failure and credit for this goes to the fighting spirit of the most obstinate Siddis who retained their dignity and status clinging to the small but invincible fortification which was headed by several masters from the clan. For Siddis, the fort of Janjira was a sort of Mecca and it remained a permanent irritation for Shivaji. It appears that he went to Agra only to seek approval of Aurangzeb to the seizure of Janjira. The historians have rightly concluded that nothing proves Shivaji's genius as a born statesman more clearly than his creation of a navy and naval basis. However, by building a strong naval force, he did not reason to pose an immediate challenge to the European powers on Indian soil nor he aspired to become a commercial power. His was a calculated move with Janjira as the target which would have served not only as the safest refuge in times of need but also provide him a solid base to deal effectively with the Europeans on the coastline in future. However, premature death gave an altogether different turn to the Indian history. Such was

his desire to capture Janjira that he even offered himself to become the vassal of the Portuguese King, though that was only an act of diplomacy. He had experienced how hard pressed he had been while Adilshah's Siddi Jauhar was in Panhala. Since he had to fight the mighty Mughals, he had Janjira in mind right from the beginning of his career and he always gave first priority to oust the Siddis from there. He detested them and especially when he was shifted as a prisoner by Aurangzeb under the strict vigil of Siddi Faulad Khan in Agra, it pained him even more as it was not an easy task for him to escape, though he managed the grand escapade at the risk of his own life and that of his son, Sambhaji. It is observed that after the escape, he concentrated his attention fully on Janjira, incurred huge losses in money and men, tried to procure help from all the Europeans and waged a prolonged and spectacular bloody war with the Siddis, but did not succeed because the Mughals, Bijapuris, British and particularly the Portuguese all sided with the latter. The Portuguese, British and Mughals attached as much importance to Janjira and Danda-Rajpuri as was given by Shivaji and the Siddis. Thus, Shivaji was an innate rival of the Siddis and Mughals. The Europeans were convinced that if Shivaji secured Janjira, they would be his next targets. If the popular legend is to be believed, it is said that Janjira had the blessings of Malik Saheb, an Aulia Saint, who had predicted that it should be in possession of the Habshis for seven generations⁸⁴. Alternatively, Shivaji did build Sindhudurg. Though the Siddis could not challenge Shivaji on land, they went on raiding and devastating his coastal towns

- 96 -

and villages by misusing the British hospitality in Bombay and often used the island for plying up the Nagothna creek for enslaving the peasantry and selling them ultimately. Maratha navy always felt the discomfiture owing to the heavy keels of the Siddi's fleet and powerful gunfire⁸⁵.

But more than that, the other causes for this failure were immature seamanship of his inferior navy, natural strength of the fort at a vantage point, formidable fleet, daring and expert seamanship of Siddis. Nevertheless, though his navy was just two-decade old at the time of his premature death, it played a significant role in the coming years as the war with the Siddis did not halt. It was continued for long years by his successors as well.

CHAPTER III

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CHAPTER IV

MARATHAS VERSUS THE SIDDIS AND THE PORTUGUESE (1680-1720)

The unexpected sudden end of Shivaji which created unimaginable vaccum on the political scene also led to almost a serious conflict like situation between his two warring sons for succession. At the time of Shivaji's death, Rajaram, his younger son was at Raigad and the army had concentrated itself there as well as in its neighbourhood. Several Maratha Chieftains were keen on installing Rajaram as the new king. However, when Sambhaji sensing these unusual developments, reached Raigad with 5000 - strong horsemen, the opposition to him came to an end. In retaliation, he inflicted punishment on those who were against him. The leader of the opposition, Annaji Datto, the former Governor of Konkan, was jailed and subsequently done to death¹.

Next year, the Siddi again apprehended some principal individuals including Muslims from Sambhaji's territories and resorted to their torture till they consented to pay him a yearly tribute of Rs.18,000/- . However, there were other rulers who took advantage of Shivaji's death and caused immediate troubles for the new king. While Phond Sawant utilised the opportunity to recover some of his areas south of Korlai river, the Siddi went on rampage in the coastal territories. He carried to Bombay on 28th April 1680, 21 persons including women and children all ill-fed to sell them as slaves. On learning this, Sambhaji rushed secretly an expedition of 200-strong force on Underi to punish the Siddis

by a surprise landing. However, Siddis who had kept a strict vigil eliminated almost half of the Marathas who attempted to land there. Siddi Qassim went to the extent of even displaying 80 cut heads on the shore but was prevented by the British there².

In fact, Aurangzeb this time was determined to hit the Marathas hard and the Siddi's forays in the coastal belt of Sambhaji clearly proved the Mughal strategy. The rebel prince, Akbar had already joined hands with Sambhaji and this new unexpected alliance brought about a fresh thinking in Aurangzeb's policy towards the Deccan where he himself had served as Viceroy during his father's time. The new approach of the Mughal naturally emboldened the Siddis. The Emperor in the meanwhile made a peace with Mewar in June 1681 and left Ajmer for the Deccan on 8th September 1681 and reached Burhanpur on 23rd November³.

This created a lot of excitement in the Siddi's camp and they resorted to inflict all types of brutalities on Sambhaji's subjects. Worse still, in December 1681, the Siddi set afire and ransacked the town of Apta on the Patalganga river. This obviously infuriated Sambhaji and the next month he dispatched a strong force of 20,000 at Rajpuri under Prince Akbar who himself had his own adequate artillery. He pounded Janjira from atop the hill for about a month and flattened all fortifications. However, Siddi Khairiyat and Siddi Qassim put up a courageous defence by using a rock in the middle of the fort as a shelter⁴. To back up the efforts of Prince Akbar, Sambhaji himself rushed

to the scene and even tried to perform the strange and unthought of feat of filling the channel with the help of his thousands of men who threw countless stones, rocks, trees etc. for the purpose but in vain. He even organised a plot in collusion with one Khandoji Farjund for its cession. However, the conspiracy was leaked out to the Siddis who put Farjund to death. To add to the woe of Sambhaji, the arrival of Mughal force in North Konkan forced him to raise the siege soon. Aurangzeb in fact had meticulously planned his actions which included the increase in imposts on all the European imports at Surat. This discretionary move was used by him to serve as a deterrent on the British and the Portuguese. As for the Siddis, they were not much worried about the British in Bombay. They had already owned some mansions in the island and put up their families there, in addition to their regular residence. While enjoying their sojourn there, at times they had the squabbles with the British and once they even hurt two British soldiers, one of whom succumbed to injuries. They displayed such a self-importance that when the culprit was sought for, Siddi Qassim sent the offender to Surat privately and Aurangzeb informed the British that the case would be dealt with by the Qaji. The Siddis also frequently utilized the island as a point to cause devastation to the coastal region of Sambhaji. When the latter lifted the siege of Janjira, the Siddis made frequent inroads there, carried away women and Brahmins and indulged in the cruel acts of cutting the noses of the latter. As they went on burning the villages and killing the cattle, they penetrated as far as Mahad. Sambhaji held a threat to

Bombay as the British did nothing to stop their misdeeds. But he could do nothing more than stopping the supplies to the islanders. The Portuguese refusal to supply the foostuffs however brought near famine situation for the British in Bombay. After monsoon, Sambhaji sent his fleet of thirty ships under the brave Admiral Siddi Misri, who alongwith Siddi Sambal had joined the Marathas during Shivaji's time. While he proceeded to strike at the Mughal fleet lying off Mazagaon, Siddi Qassim countered him in the river of Thana with fifteen ships with his best men aboard. In a very violent encounter, the Maratha navy lost four vessels including the flagship of its Admiral. Siddi Misri was himself mortally injured. Peeved as Sambhaji was, he determined to get the island of Elephanta fortified but had to abandon the plan in view of the immediate action against the Mughal attack⁵.

Aurangzeb's strategy in 1682 was a three-pronged assault on land against Sambhaji. While the Siddi was entrusted with the work of coordinating with the armed forces and sever the Maratha supplies on way, another force led by one Shahbuddin was to march from Kalyan in North Konkan. Prince Muazzam from Belgaum had been instructed to proceed by Ramghat Pass to join later the Mughal contingent under Shah Alam who was to run his military operations from the territory of Goa. To back up this move, in December, a huge Mughal fleet with a number of ships, large and small, carrying provisions from Surat arrived in Bombay⁶.

Sambhaji was hard pressed. His long significant

letter written to Raja Ram Singh of Amber, the son of Jai Singh in November 1682, throws light on his attitude and determination against Aurangzeb. He wrote: "You came to know how your son Krishna Singh met his ruin for having intrigued with Sultan Akbar. The present wicked Emperor believes that we Hindus have all become effeminate and that we have lost all regard for our religion. We cannot put up with anything derogatory to our character as soldiers (Kshatriyas). The Vedas and the codes enjoy certain injunctions of religion and caste, which we cannot allow to be trampled under foot. We are prepared to sacrifice everything, our treasure, our land, our forts, in waging war against this satanic Emperor. We have killed many a brave captains of Emperor, imprisoned several, released some after exacting ransom, and some out of compassion, several effected their escape by offering bribes.

The moment has now arrived when the Emperor himself can be captured and made prisoner with the result that we can rebuild our temples and restore our religious practices. We strongly assure you that we have resolved to execute all this in the near future.

"But we are in comparison with you young and inexperienced. We have seen and heard so much about your valour and your zeal for religion. You at present fully possess the seven arms of Kingship, so that if you muster courage and co-operate with us in the task of annihilating the power of this Emperor, what may not be accomplished?"

"On our side we are planning to dispatch Akbar and Durgadas into Gujarat, so that you on your side must

courageously execute whatever is possible. Shah Abbas of Persia has signified his willingness to support the cause of Akbar, but it does not in our opinion behove us to accept Muslim help in this cause and enable Abbas to gain the credit. Was it not your own revered father Jai Singh who gained the honour of helping Aurangzeb to capture the throne of Delhi? You can now follow the same example and obtain the same credit by helping Akbar. If you and we join our forces and place Akbar on the throne, we shall get the opportunity of protecting our religion and on your part you will shed lustre on the house of Jai Singh⁷.

The letter clearly proves that Sambhaji had planned to give the Emperor a stiff resistance and in several actions Mughal chiefs had to surrender and escape by paying ransom. By all accounts the Portuguese played a significant role during this Mughal-Maratha war. Soon after his father's death, Sambhaji had approached them to secure their support. He had written from Panhala to the Portuguese Council for the help and thereafter had sent his envoy to Goa during the summer of 1680 to discuss the proposal of the treaty. The envoy, carried with him Portuguese gifts including one European Musket engraved in gold and four rich pieces of fabric. However, as is evident from an important letter written on behalf of the Council by Antonio Pais de Sande to Sambhaji on 4th June, 1681, it appears that the latter was not so keen on the treaty. The letter reveals that Sambhaji had sought the Portuguese help from Panhala itself against his enemies before ascending the throne and that the Council was yet to

receive any response from Sambhaji to their proposal. It further discloses his complaints about the tyrannical acts practised by Sambhaji's men and specially those committed by the Subedar of Bicholim in Portuguese territory requesting Sambhaji to punish such persons. The letter further explicitly makes it clear that in future, the Portuguese would not care about the cordial relations between the two as the Marathas had broken the peace that had existed between them⁸. On account of this rigid strength, Sambhaji quickly responded by sending his agent, Essaji Gambir Rao, to Goa to conclude a peace treaty with the Portuguese. However, since he had carried no credentials, nothing could take place⁹. Then Sambhaji rushed Anaji Pundit to Bicholim in July 1681 and the Portuguese sent their representative with a gift to negotiate about the proposed treaty, but Pundit's large force and several cases of thefts and tyrannical acts of Subedar of Bicholim came in the way though diplomacy continued for quite some time¹⁰.

It is relevant to underline that apart from this strategy, Sambhaji had other designs in mind in order to deal with the advancing Mughals on land and the Siddis in naval warfare. He had admitted the Arabs, old enemies of the Portuguese, with a view to utilise them against the Siddis of Janjira. In the beginning of 1682, he moved to fortify the island of Anjediv, off Karwar to restrain from there the Mughal advance. However, the Portuguese Viceroy Conde de Alvor came to know about this move through intelligence. Consequently, he took counter measures and sent four Ghurabs and 200 men equipped with necessary war material to

occupy Anjediv. Essaji Gambhir Rao and Subedar of Ankola wrote to the Viceroy to desist from the occupation of the island but in vain. The Viceroy retorted that he was not supposed to give account to any stranger of what he was doing in his own jurisdiction. Interestingly, Subedar of Bicholim, Zivaji Vinayak with an infantry again entered the island of Chorão (Chodan) on 19th April 1682 across Mandovi and killed some Christians¹¹. However, these occurrences did not break the relations between the two.

Whatever be the wisdom or otherwise of securing Anjediv unsuccessfully, Sambhaji continued to be busy in organising his forces on land and sea against the Mughals. The British too were facing now a tough time for not being able to procure food supplies from Sambhaji's region. Though Portuguese had gifted the island of Bombay to the British, of late the British had developed an attitude tinged with jealousy towards them because they too did not supply anything to them. As a result, the prices of the necessary commodities had risen by 300% in Bombay. Under these circumstances, Sambhaji took recourse to send Daulat Khan to attack the Siddi in Bombay harbour in October 1682. But, it resulted into the total victory for the Siddi¹². The presence of Siddis among 3,000 Mughal soldiers who had actually occupied Bombay in December 1682 had created a panicky situation in the island. Sambhaji who had thought to invade the island changed his mind now on seeing its occupation by the Mughal forces. He realised that if he were to drive away the English from Bombay, the Mughals might seize it. Therefore, he sent an envoy to Bombay for

arranging discreetly a defensive alliance by offering assistance to the British against the Mughals. But the British were in quandary and were unwilling to annoy any one of them. However, John Child, the British General at Bombay finally decided to send Henry Smith to accompany Sambhaji's envoy for holding negotiations with the Maratha King, but the mission did not succeed. The Siddis had become such a menace to the British that they sent Captain Gary to open negotiations in Kalyan with the Mughal General Ramant Khan in December¹³. Sambhaji wanted that the Europeans should not side with the Mughals. But the Portuguese in the same month allowed ungrudgingly the passage to the Mughal army through their territories. The Viceroy, Conde de Alvor had already issued orders to his General in the North, Dom Lobo Silveira and to the Captains of Chaul, Bassein, Daman and other forts not to interfere with the movements of Mughal army either on land or the rivers¹⁴. This obviously angered Sambhaji. The Mughal Ambassador, Shaik Muhammed was in Goa in January 1683. What was discussed between him and the Viceroy, Conde de Alvor was summed up by the latter in a letter to his King stating that the Mughal Emperor was in war against Sambhaji and the former expected the Portuguese would also do the same against him, the common enemy. He added further that the Mughals had pleaded with him not to obstruct their fleet proceeding from Surat to Bombay and their armies should be allowed to move freely through Portuguese rivers and areas. The Mughals had also sought his permission for buying provisions from the Portuguese territories¹⁵. In turn, the Portuguese were to get the territories conquered by the Mughals which were adjacent to their borders besides some minor concessions¹⁶.

The signing of the treaty consumed considerable time and the Siddi deputed his envoy, Malar Ali to the Viceroy, Conde de Alvor to expedite the finalisation of the treaty without any further delay¹⁷. The delay had provided Sambhaji sufficient time to reorganise his own resources and he did not demur to take action against the Portuguese. He dispatched a large force of 30,000 to raid Chaul and Bassein even ignoring the monsoon. The damage and destruction was so heavy that the Viceroy, Conde de Alvor had no other choice than to venture himself out to take the field soon after the rains. As a strategy, in order to divert Sambhaji's forces, he seized nearby Phonda with the strong contingent of 1200 European soldiers and 25,000 natives and simultaneously ordered the fleet from Anjediv to navigate towards neighbouring Karwar¹⁸. In retaliation, Sambhaji with Prince Akbar left Chaul with sufficiently vigorous contingent and stormed the Viceroy's forces near Phonda. Conde de Alvor soon realised that either he had to retreat or surrender as the losses suffered were already too high. Sambhaji, however, kept the pressure on and raided the territory under the King of Sunda who was friendly to the Portuguese. In the North, his energetic force was continuing to surmount the walls of Chaul fort and the town consecutively for two nights on 22nd and 23rd July 1683. Simultaneously, the Maratha force was pursuing the offensive against Portuguese possessions of Danu (Dahanu), Asserim, Saibana and Tarapor¹⁹.

Significantly, the Portuguese rendered help to the Mughals openly in this war. This is reflected clearly in a

Persian attendance sheet dated 21st December 1682 which shows Fernando Rodrigues and João Rodrigues serving as gunners with the Mughals at the fort of Shivner. There were others too who were serving as bombardiers at the forts of Sholapur and Kalyan for them²⁰. On top of this, there were still others who surprisingly worked against Sambhaji. For instance, the Desai of Pedne, Keshav Prabhu supplied secret information to the Portuguese regarding the activities and movements of Desais in the Konkan and provided strategic and toponomical details of Sambhaji's forts from Ankola to Rajapur in his letter to Viceroy Conde de Alvor in 1683²¹. The Portuguese found the situation so alarming that in desperation they burnt alive some of the Sambhaji's subjects near Chaul and Bassein and desecrated certain temples²². But in reality, they had suffered a lot owing to the incessant onslaughts of the Marathas. By October 1683, the situation in Chaul was precarious. It goes to the credit of the Siddi brothers, Khairiyat and Kasim, who saved it by helping the Portuguese Captain of Chaul with the rushing of timely reinforcements, though it was considered not sufficient enough. Now, Sambhaji occupied the island Juva (Santo Estevão) in Goa and later raided Bardez and Salcete. With the sudden and unexpected inroads made by Marathas, the Portuguese got panicky and thousands of Christian converts fled to Karnataka. The Viceroy, Conde de Alvor was compelled to retreat and as a last resort, he thought of offering prayers to the popular Saint Francis Xavier enshrined in Bom Jesus church in Old Goa to help him out from the calamitous situation. At this juncture, Shah Alam's arrival with huge

force in the vicinity of Goa saved the Portuguese from Sambhaji as the Marathas withdrew in haste. When the Maratha King came to know that Shah Alam intended to invade his areas in South Konkan and the Desais and the Portuguese might unite with the enemy, he initiated peace negotiations with the latter through Prince Akbar and Kavi Kalash and himself left for Raigarh. The worried Portuguese Viceroy felt relieved owing to the tide in his favour and the sudden offer hastened to conclude peace with Sambhaji. The Viceroy's desire to sign peace treaty at this point of time was so strong that he presented a big pearl along with 5000 rupees to the wife of Kavi Kalash to achieve that end²³. However, an important aspect to note was that both the parties craved for peace with each other for their own interests and the circumstances too demanded it. Probably Sambhaji was unaware of the financial stringency of the Portuguese State. The Viceroy, Conde de Alvor's treasury was unable to meet the exorbitant war expenses and he had to somehow arrange 300,000 xerafins from the ecclesiastical authorities. The Portuguese imagined that Sambhaji had almost struck a death blow to the missionary activity and the christianisation in Goa. The fear lurked so much in their minds that all the silver items from the churches had been taken possession of. The religious men clergy and the natives in Chaul, Bassein and Daman too had adopted the similar steps as the treasuries had been emptied there also²⁴. However, the Viceroy could not send the ratified treaty to Sambhaji immediately partly due to the uncertainty of war and partly owing to the changing itinerary of Sambhaji, he being engaged in the war at several places with the Mughals. When the ratified treaty was

finally sent to Sambhaji in March 1684 through Friar Antonio de S. Joseph, who was accompanied by other priests and a Brahmin Ram Krishna Naik, he in turn demanded the island of Anjediv besides an huge amount. Since nothing tangible resulted from this, the Marathas continued to occupy the annexed territories, and refused to restore the prisoners and 47 artillery pieces captured from the four forts of Bardez. Nor did they restore the ships captured in the river of Chapora. To warp explanation, the Viceroy and his envoy maintained that the two promises concerning Anjediv and an huge amount in the form of a generous present never figured in the treaty and tried to clarify that the interpreter's words had been misunderstood. Actually, what the Portuguese envoy had specified at Raigarh was that the island of Anjediv would be deserted by the Portuguese within a period of two months on account of its inhospitable climate, as the English had done earlier when they had occupied it as a last resort on being refused the handing over of Bombay as a dowry for quite a long time. As regards the costly present, the envoy argued that he never meant that the gift would be as magnificent as was demanded by Sambhaji²⁵.

What emerges from these ambassadorial parleys is that Sambhaji desired to extract war indemnity in kind, in the form of a very costly gift.

When Sambhaji returned to Raigarh in January 1684, Shah Alam destroyed the large mansions and pleasure gardens on way of Akbar and Sambhaji. He remained in Goa for some duration at the behest of the Portuguese before departing

towards Malvan. While coming towards Goa, Shah Alam had met hardly any resistance after crossing the Ramghat Pass. Sambhaji did make a desperate attempt to repulse him. But though he had to face defeat and had to retreat, there were heavy losses on both sides. Surprisingly, the Mughal force did not venture to attack the Maratha hill forts. Nevertheless, they had to pay a greater price in men, and material while withdrawing as they were constantly harassed by the Marathas with their gurilla tactics. The Marathas had adopted the novel way of cutting the grass and crops en route which proved catastrophic to forces and the animals. The situation was so grave that some of the Mughal Chiefs had to overtip the Marathas for their escapades. The big fleet of ships that cruised from Surat proved very ineffective and several vessels were taken into custody by the Marathas. The Portuguese however took the advantage and secured back most of their territories which they had lost during this war. The ultimate result was that the beleaguered Mughal forces under Shah Alam returned to Aurangabad on 18th May 1684, without any significant achievement²⁶.

To all intents and purposes, Sambhaji was definitely more effective than his father while dealing with the ambitious Portuguese. He had also established new harmonious relations with the British by means of a peace accord as the latter abhorred the harassment and embarrassment caused to them by the Siddis. In a sharp departure from the traditional courtesy, Keigwin strongly and firmly told Siddi Qassim in 1684 that his personnel would not be permitted to disembark in Bombay during the winter except for drawing

water. As a result, the Siddi initially opted to stay at Underi and subsequently cruised back to Surat. As per the treaty signed by Sambhaji with the British, the former conceded to defray Rs.12,000 to the latter to repay an old debt and offered amity against the common enemy, the Siddi. He also permitted the Company to establish factories in Karnataka and Ginji. Besides he allowed them trade facilities including the establishment of small factories in Nagothna and Pen. In exchange, he received a good deal of war material which he needed most at the time²⁷.

As against this, by January 1686, the Portuguese Captain-in-Chief in the North, Joseph de Mello, had ousted the Marathas from the town of Bassein, islands of Savem and Caranja, hills of Chandevari, Guidiana and Gris. Asserim was also recaptured after bribing the Marathas²⁸. The Portuguese Viceroy further strengthened his position by concluding a treaty with the Desais, Deva Sawant Bhonsle and Rama Dalvy Bhonsle, who had taken shelter in Goa during May 1685 on account of Sambhaji's attacks. The Viceroy refused to hand over them to Sambhaji. He was of the opinion that since the Desais were rich enough, they could eventually carry on the war against Sambhaji. Therefore, he had signed the accord with them in early 1686. It was agreed therein that the Portuguese would help the Desais to capture all the territories from Banda downwards to Ankola. Similarly, they were to seize the forts and hills lying between Kudal and Chaul. The conquered territories and forts after the war were to be divided into three parts, two-thirds of which would go to the Portuguese who promised to help recruit

Desais in the Mughal forces. In the eventuality of defeat, the Portuguese State was to provide them all the traditional liberties including the right to have temples and other benefits which they had under Sambhaji's rule. The Desais in turn also agreed not to seek any aid from the Europeans ---- British, Dutch or the French²⁹.

Thus the Desais of Konkan betrayed Sambhaji much against his consternation. Whereas they were expected to stand by him against his enemies and adversaries they openly joined hands with the latter and caused whatever harm they could to Sambhaji³⁰. Even the very first envoy deputed by Sambhaji to the Portuguese, Ramaji Naik Tacur (Thakur), worked as an informer for the latter and constantly supplied them information regarding the movements and strategies of the former. Specially during Sambhaji's attack on Goa on 24th-26th November 1683, he played a treacherous role. His services were greatly valued by the Portuguese Viceroy for whom he worked for the paity sum. He maintained secret contacts with the Portuguese and went to their side a number of times from Sambhaji's camp during nights and stealthily gave valuable advice to them against his master³¹.

By this time, the power of Bijapur had weakened in the Deccan mainly on account of factionalism and the rise of the Marathas under Shivaji. Aurangzeb's stance towards both the Shia Kingdoms, Bijapur and Golkonda, was actuated primarily by imperial interests and to some extent by religious considerations. He held the strong view that the growth of the Marathas was on account of the weak Shia

Kingdoms. That is the reason why he recast his strategy in the Deccan and resolved to reduce them first and subsequently deal with the Marathas. He could not capture his rebel son Prince Akbar and though he defeated the Marathas, the robust army which Shivaji had fostered and inspired with lofty aims could not be fully subdued. He therefore concentrated his attention on the kingdom of Bijapur first and the final siege of the city began on 11th April 1685. Even the Emperor himself was fully involved in the military actions in July 1686 which resulted into the capitulation of the Bijapuris in the next month itself. Sikandar, the last Adilshah had no other option than to surrender. Bijapur once a renowned kingdom not only lost its independence and glory but was turned into a devastated city as the ruthless Emperor saw to it that its fine paintings, frescoes, buildings desecrated and destroyed.

Next he turned his eyes towards Qutbshahi Kingdom of Golkonda where he reached himself in early 1687. He did tighten the siege but the fort had enough food and war material to last for eight months. The indiscriminate use of mines, constant bombarding could not subdue the besieged but the famine, epidemic and retaliations of the Qutubshahi forces created havoc among the Mughals. However, Aurangzeb opted for a ruse. He lured an Afghan, Abdulla Pani, who allowed the entry to the Mughals into the fort by opening the main gate. The loyal Qutubshahi forces retaliated courageously under Abdur Razzaq who braved the onslaught till he was seriously wounded. Later, on his recovery he was elevated to a high position by the Emperor in his own

service. Abul Hasan, the last Qutubshah was taken into captivity and sent to Daulatabad fort to spend the rest of his life on a pension of Rs.50,000 a year and thus Golkonda was annexed to the Mughal empire³².

The English in the meanwhile had strengthened their position in Bombay. They had gradually built up a city in the marshy island and thousands of weavers from Chaul had migrated and settled there for living. They already had several prosperous business centres in the coastal region under Sambhaji. By December 1687, the East India Company Directors had resolved to give a new dimension to their policy and they decided to secure new areas in India. To pursue this objective, they strengthened their military base for eventual expansion. Bombay, now being developed replaced Surat as the main centre of administration. But in the process of expansion they faced the stiff opposition as well.

When they tried to fortify their establishment at Hughli, it was pillaged by the Mughals in October 1686 and they were left with the only option of seeking peace terms. However, the next year they renewed hostilities when the naval force was replenished from London with the help of the new naval unit under William Heath. Sir Josiah Child's (John Child's brother) overbearing disposition also inspired the British to dare the Mughal power. Sir John Child's systematic strategic planning gave a big jolt to the Mughals as he captured their vessel loaded with food stock from Surat to the Siddi in 1689. Siddi Qassim protested and wrote several letters to the English in Bombay but in vain. Finally, Aurangzeb took a

recalcitrant stand to punish the English, and consequently the Siddi in February 1690 with 20,000 men descended on Sewree (Shivdi) during night with this view in mind and on the following day he took over the fort of Mazagaon and soon took into possession Mahim and Sion. The Portuguese Jesuits in the area also helped the Siddi and the British had to run away abandoning the armoury and the treasure there though Sambhaji rushed some enforcement which helped save several British lives³³.

With this interesting development, the Siddis virtually became masters of Bombay and the English had to sue for peace as the Mughal army had also positioned itself in Bhivandi and Kalyan³⁴. The war had been so disastrous for the British that they ultimately disclosed to have seized the four Mughal ships in February 1690 and not only promised to return all the captured goods but also in addition Rs.150,000 in silver, 500 pieces of cloth from London, some horses and a gift worth Rs.4,000³⁵.

In concert with the attitude of conciliation, Aurangzeb then wrote to Etmad Khan, General at Surat about the peace with the British and directed him to write to the Siddi restore immediately the intercepted merchandise from Bombay so that it could be returned to their rightful owners³⁶.

Sambhaji, unlike his father, did not indulge in the warfare with the Mughals while the latter were engrossed in the attempts to conquer Bijapur and Golkonda. As a result,

he had neither taken adequate precautions nor even paid sufficient attention to his own personal security with regard to the Mughals. The net result of this was that he was surprisingly captured alongwith Kavi Kalash and twenty five other chieftains at Sangameshwar on 11th February 1689 by an energetic Mughal officer, Muqarrab Khan. Sambhaji and Kavi Kalash were brought to the imperial camp and were publicly paraded. They were subjected to such a torture that the eyes of Sambhaji were nailed. The indomitable Maratha gave up food and fasted for a few days in protest. However, he did not compromise with Aurangzeb. Consequently, he was put to death in the presence of the emperor. Prince Akbar, whom Sambhaji planned to install as Emperor with the help of Ram Singh of Amer, escaped to Persia in a British ship. Aurangzeb seized this opportunity and captured immediately the Maratha seat of power, Raigarh. Though Rajaram escaped from there in the guise of a beggar, Sambhaji's family including the infant son, Shahu, were captured. The Siddi had not given up Bombay till the middle of June 1690. As he had rendered timely help to the Mughal army under Etikad Khan to capture Raigarh, he was amply rewarded by the Emperor who gifted him Anjanvel and Sindhudurg in Ratnagiri, besides the fort of Raigarh³⁷. On the heels of this, occurred the occupation of Miraj, Junnar, Chaul, Kalyan and Bhivandi by the Mughals while on the other hand the Siddi annexed Revas, Thal, Mahad, Dabhol and Gowalkot to his territories. Now he had turned more bold to send frequently the raiding groups far in the interior of the Maratha regions³⁷.

However, a noteworthy feature of the political scene in Western India was that the tragic end of Sambhaji brought together the Marathas as never before and they unitedly waged a continuous war against the invading Mughals. Rajaram who had slipped away could reach as far as Ginji in Madras despite all the measures adopted by Aurangzeb to nab him. It is learnt from a Portuguese document that Rajaram first slipped to Javli and then to Panhala and from there managed to reach Ginji in 1689 itself. The Mughal General Bahadur Khan posted near Goa had written to the Governor D. Rodrigo da Costa to capture Rajaram, dead or alive, in case he happened to pass through the Portuguese territories or rivers³⁸. The Mughals had also kept a vigil in Karnataka but the Queen of Bednur had allowed Rajaram to pass through her territory. Later, she had to pay a great price in the form of a huge sum amounting to eighteen lakhs Pagodes and three forts to the Mughals as Aurangzeb's son, Sultan Tara(?) had seized parts of Karnataka, coming under the Queen. However, Aurangzeb recalled his son, but he disobeyed and left towards a mountainous region, fearing his own imprisonment for the escape of Rajaram through Karnataka³⁹. The Mughal forces continued to maintain the constant pressure on all the Maratha places, while Aurangzeb himself camped near Bijapur and directed the intricate operations of the campaigns. But with the widespread epidemic of a plague in his army he lost thousands of his men, horses, elephants and camels and he was compelled to retreat with beleaguered army to a remote village. On the other hand, the Maratha Generals, Ramachandra Pant, Shankarji Malhar and Parshuram Trimbak seized several opportunities for launching attacks against

their enemy. They devastated the vast regions the Mughals had occupied and even that around the imperial camp. As a result, the Mughal Generals who were already harassed by the Maratha sorties were exhausted and they came forward to make secret deals with the Marathas by offering them huge amounts so that the war would go on but without causing any harm to either party so that the Emperor would not be unhappy. Even the Desais who had sided the Mughals felt disappointed and disgusted with the Mughal forces. Several of them deserted and joined Rajaram when they observed that the Mughal soldiers were abusing the modesty of Hindu women and were desecrating the temples. The Portuguese too could not remain indifferent towards the success of the Marathas and they started now providing the same facilities to them as they had provided earlier to the Mughals in their territories. Offers of signing a peace treaty with the Portuguese had already been made by Rajaram, and the friendly response from the Portuguese further encouraged the Marathas who now felt free to ransack the territories at free will. The Portuguese did not like the Mughal forces in their vicinity as neighbours as they feared the similar fate for themselves after the eventful end of Bijapur, Golkonda and Raigarh Kingdoms at the hands of the former. The Mughal General, Matabar Khan who had stationed himself at Bhivandi and Kalyan with an huge force had also realised that the Portuguese were rendering aid to the Marathas at that time in the North as he witnessed many officers of Rajaram had left their families behind in the Portuguese territories. Therefore, rather in retaliation, Matabar Khan attacked Bassein in 1693, set afire the churches

there and totally discomfitted the Portuguese, though the Governor had rushed there all the available enforcement from Goa to its rescue. In fact, at this juncture, the Portuguese neither had sufficient vessels nor manpower and funds to indulge in such a zest for war and hence they tried to use diplomatic means by drawing the attention of the Emperor to their plight at Bassein in such a submissive way that it worked out well. It was on account of the help rendered by the priests close to imperial court and Matabar's jealous rivals around the seat of power that Aurangzeb was made to believe of their pitiable state and hence he ordered his General, Matabar Khan, to pay a war indemnity of Rs.2 lakhs to the Portuguese. Matabar did try however to clarify his position but it was in vain as it was too late to stir the Emperor⁴⁰.

To look beyond the narrow confines of the North, the situation towards the South was different. In 1690, one Lachmi Naik had given up the services of Aurangzeb on realising the wanton demolition of the temples by the Mughals everywhere. He therefore approached Ginji in January 1691, with 3000 horsemen and 6000 men on foot and explained his position to Rajaram. While the forces of Naik advanced, the Mughal garrisons stationed at several small points on the border had to abandon their positions with fear. Some of them even took refuge in Madras. Subsequently, in June, Rajaram was financed by the Dutch as well. They presented him 2000 Pagodes at St. David (Tevanapatam). Besides several Portuguese traders at Porto Novo also presented him thousands

of 'Chakram'. But despite this help from different quarters in August, his court at Ginji felt the severe financial crunch and therefore he proposed to dispose of Tevenapatam and the region surrounding it to the French for 50,000 Pagodes as Lachmi Naik too now had been subdued by the Mughals⁴¹. It may also be added that within a couple of years, in 1694, the great Maratha General Santaji Ghorpade while pillaging near Goa, also invaded Bardez and raised a tax from its inhabitants⁴².

By this time, the Siddi had not only recovered what he had lost to Shivaji but also captured important forts of Suvarndurg and Chiplun⁴³. The Mughal General Matabar Khan who had felt highly offended by the Portuguese was in league with the Siddi now to retaliate and teach them a lesson. He once again launched an attack against their territories in the North during 1693. The assault was spirited and several hundreds of farmers and villagers deserted their villages as the Siddi had also sent his men in eighty ships northward to Salsete to assist the Khan. However, prompt action by the Portuguese Commander-in-Chief of the fleet of the North saved the situation and he successfully brought an end to the war⁴⁴.

More importantly, there had been no serious check on the activities of the Siddi of Janjira and he felt so elated being a favourite of the Emperor that he took liberty to dispatch ships to Muscat for bringing horses. The horse was a monopolised item of trade to the Portuguese since the beginning. When the Portuguese General for the Strait,

Antonio da Cunha de Mello, captured one of his vessels in 1693 for not possessing the necessary passport, he immediately dispatched his envoy to Goa and demanded its early restoration⁴⁵. The Siddi had also retained two Abyssinians claiming that they were Siddis, though in fact they were fugitives from Goa and one of them was willing to become a Christian after slipping to Chaul. However, the Portuguese dared not interfere with him on this issue as the matter involved the religion. Later, fearing that Aurangzeb might be deliberately or wrongly informed by the Siddi that the Portuguese were converting the people to Christianity by force, the State Council resolved not to take any risk in such a sensitive matter. Later, the said Abyssinian was tried by the Holy Office of Inquisition at Goa and having been found a true Christian, he was sent to Bahia in Brazil so that he could not continue with his fugitive pursuits in Goa⁴⁶.

Curiously enough, the last decade of the 17th century in South India revolves round the daring deeds of Santaji Ghorpade and Dhanaji Jadhav who appeared to be in action on all sides and simultaneously harassed incessantly the old Emperor who seemed to have acquired everything but in reality, all had been let slip. He had descended down to Deccan with high hopes and though the Marathas were defeated, they could not be crushed totally. On the contrary, the Marathas had gained the upper hand over the Mughals. The treasury of Aurangzeb was fast depleting and the administration in general was marked with corruption at all levels not only in the north but in the south as well. While the Marathas were giving a fight to the finish, the Mughal

soldiers at times indulged in insurgent activities for not securing arrears of pay. On the other hand, since Rajaram himself had no sufficient funds to carry on the relentless war, he had given liberty to his officers, to pillage on their own free will. While Prahlad Niraji, a Maratha chief, looked after the matters well in east Karnataka, Santaji and Dhanaji went on rampage from one region to another creating a great loss and panic among the people in Aurangzeb's camp. They even went to the extent of posing threat to the Emperor's camp. They disturbed every plan and strategy of the Mughals extracting from many of them huge amounts and forcing some of them even to join the Marathas in their pursuits to harass the Emperor's subjects. In reality, Aurangzeb was facing a people's war and he could not put an easy end to it as there was no Maratha power at the centre as such or the state army to be charged or exterminated⁴⁷.

However, it must be acknowledged that on the sea front the Mughal General Matabar Khan with the help of the Siddi plagued the Maratha garrisons at Sagargarh, Rajkot and Pali. The Siddi had acquired Revas and Thal and he exerted tremendous influence in Pen river as well as in Kolaba. Several forts in the interior had gone to the Mughals. However, it can well be argued that it was only because of Kanhoji Angria, the Marathas could withstand the frequent onslaughts at Khanderi and Kolaba⁴⁸.

It may be recalled that Kanhoji's father, Tukoji Sankhpal had worked for Shahji. Later on Shivaji placed him at Suvarndurg and it was here that Kanhoji was brought up and

received early training in naval warfare there. When this citadel was captured by the Siddi in 1689 and the Maratha commander there also opted for capitulation, the young Kanhoji Angria resolved to take up matter himself. And surprisingly his brave counterattack did save the fort. Being extremely pleased with the young warrior, in 1690 he was appointed second in command by Rajaram under Sidhoji Gujar who had secured Kolaba from the Siddi in 1683. After the death of Siddi Khairiyat in 1696 and Siddi Qassim in 1697, Siddi Surul Khan took the charge of Janjira. Next year in 1698, Kanhoji Angria was appointed the Chief Admiral of the Maratha navy. He soon proved his mettle and meted the similar treatment to all the powers on sea, as the Marathas were dealing with them on land⁴⁹.

At this point, it will be appropriate to mention that the Marathas had imprisoned one Portuguese Dom Antonio alongwith his family while attacking a village, Turumba (Turbhe, present day Trombay) in the North. The Captain of Chaul was trying to get him freed and he accordingly informed the Viceroy in 1696 about the readiness of the Siddi to lend a helping hand to him in launching an attack against Khanderi to liberate the prisoners⁵⁰. In fact, since the Arabian sea at the time was infested by an Arab and English pirates, the blame could not be attributed to Kanhoji alone for capturing the vessels of other powers specially when the Marathas were waging the battle of life and death. Therefore, it would be naive to expect anything different in his conduct. Moreover, the appearance of the English galley, Adventure of 30 guns and 30 oars with a crew of 200 Europeans under the pirate,

Captain Kidd had already created a panicky situation and a general terror⁵¹. Even Siddi could not check the open piracy and Aurangzeb was therefore impelled to seek the help of Arabs of Muscat as he was fully aware that the Arabs had continued to challenge the Portuguese from Cape Comorin to the Red Sea and had often razed their set-ups on the Indian coastline. His incoming and outgoing goods-laden ships to Mecca had been captured in the past and in one case all the pilgrims were put to death by the pirates. So he entrusted the work of controlling the piracy to the people of Qibla (Muslims) as he was convinced that there was no amity among the four European powers ----- the Dutch, French, English and Portuguese⁵².

In the light of foregoing considerations, it is relevant to underline that though the Portuguese had assured the Siddi the help to curb the piracy, they did nothing practically. Aurangzeb being already annoyed with their attitude ordered the Siddi to teach them a lesson. Consequently, the Arabs and the Siddi joined hands and invaded Salsete in the North. However, in the naval action that ensued, the combine lost 600 men while the Portuguese loss was negligible. The Viceroy's letter of 22nd February 1700 written to Siddi Ibrahim Ghulam posted at Ponda by the Mughals reveals that the Siddi had even rendered help to the Marathas during the assault of Arabs on Salsete against the Portuguese⁵³.

In this changed scenario, the Portuguese did not have easy time with the Siddis either. To illustrate the point,

one Siddi Abdulla stealthily took away some livestock from the Portuguese subjects in Goa in 1699. The Portuguese Viceroy on 7th September 1699 wrote to Siddi Ghulam Ibrahim at Phonda that he did not understand the reason as to why the vassals of the Mughal Emperor should indulge in such acts when the Portuguese had been obliging them. He further expressed that had he not thrown out the Bhonsles, they might have been the lords of Phonda. But now his subjects were getting the kind treatment (of thefts) by the captains of the Mughal Emperor! The Viceroy felt that the Emperor was not in the know of such happenings and expressed the hope that Siddi Abdulla would be punished and compelled to return the livestock thereby preventing him to take action which would have been more convenient⁵⁴.

Contrary to expectations, the Siddi had developed some intimacy with Kanhoji Angria at this time and it can be understood when we observe the Viceroy Antonio Luis Gonsalves da Camara Coutinho specially instructing Father Frei Luis de Piedade on 4th May 1700 to apprise the Mughal Emperor about the Siddi's pact with 'Shivajis' (Marathas) for the liberation of a fort called 'Colla' (Kholgad, presently known as Cabo da Rama fort) with a view to enter into the Konkan⁵⁵.

The Viceroy had earlier issued several instructions to the same Father, including the one on 20th April 1700 for instance, insisting upon him to bring to the notice of Aurangzeb that the 'Siddi was obstructing the Portuguese against Rajaram and in his fort of Danda he had hoisted Rajaram's flag on one side and Mughal flag on the other⁵⁶.

What was the outcome of these complaints is not known. However, there is no doubt that Kanhoji Angria had made his presence felt soon after becoming the Chief Admiral. The capture of ships, free plundering and looting and probably the repeated complaints made by the Portuguese occasioned a joint attack of the Siddis, Mughals and the Portuguese in 1700 against him. Interestingly enough, the combine with all their might faced serious reverses. Portuguese documents reveal that the Siddi had blockaded the fort of Kolaba and held Angria's vessels that came to the rescue of Ramchandra Pant who had raided and burnt villages of the Siddi with a large force of 20,000 men. When he tried to effect entry into the village under the control of the Portuguese, they retaliated by opening fire. The Portuguese Captain allowed Siddi's ships to pass through the rivers under their control. But Kanhoji surprised them by capturing the territory around Sagargarh. He also compelled his enemies to agree to give him two-third revenues from Kolaba, Khanderi and Sagargarh, while one-third would go to the Mughals. He also succeeded in claiming the entire income of Rajkot, while the revenue income of Chaul fort was to be divided equally between him and the Mughals. The income of Parhurst, a village near Alibag was to go to the Siddi. That Kanhoji got better of his enemy in this war is also recorded by the English Factory at Bombay. The Siddi had been beaten and bruised by Angria's men so badly that he had to call for a surgeon from Bombay to treat his wounded men. Next year, when the Siddi attacked the fort of Kolaba in March 1701, the assault was repulsed and he was compelled to retreat with great losses. Later, he accused the British of complicity in

helping the Angria with ammunition⁵⁷.

On the other hand, what must be appreciated of the Marathas was their continuous fight on the land against the Mughals. After a prolonged siege of Ginji lasting over eight years, Zulfiqar Khan, Mughal General had been finally successful in seizing the strong fort in January 1698. But Rajaram gave a slip to them and went to Satara where he amassed and built up a powerful army to keep up the struggle continued against the Mughals. When Aurangzeb besieged the fort of Satara too in December 1699, it was defended fiercely and heroically. There, the position of the Mughal General, Sharza Khan was very pitiable and he urged upon the Emperor to rush immediate succour to him which was promptly sent under Firuz Khan. In the meanwhile, Siddi Abdul Qadir who was to join the Mughal forces was attacked by Bhonsle causing a great loss of men and complete equipment. However, after the death of Rajaram on 12th March 1700, the fort was surrendered on certain conditions by his minister, Parashuram. Aurangzeb, the old Emperor then personally went on capturing fort after fort of the Marathas, but what was lost one day was soon recovered by the valiant Marathas who were fighting now under the banner of Tarabai, Rajaram's widow, a courageous, indomitable, intelligent high spirited woman who successfully brought the glories to the Maratha power by opting again to the traditional guerilla warfare which further despirited the Mughal forces. When the Mughal forces besieged Khelna, Dhanaji Jadhav arrived there in early February 1701 and made incursion in the camp of Aurangzeb who

asked Zulfiqar Khan to dispel him towards Parenda. In a major clash that occurred on the banks of river Bangana, for a day, there were several casualties. While the Emperor himself supervised the siege, the Marathas disappeared from the scene taking advantage of the nightfall. Asad Khan was already near Khelna and he was assisted by Tarbiyat Khan, the commander of artillery. Fath-ullah Khan, Muhammad Amin Khan were assisting Siddi Yakut Khan of Danda-Rajpuri, while Prince Bidar Bakht, Siddi Ambar and Hamid-ud-Din and Budh Singh arrived with their contingents. But the Marathas who were adopting guerilla tactics were well placed and made night assaults nullifying the efforts put in siege and killing several especially on 23rd April. Fath-ullah Khan himself was severely hit by a stone that滑ed him down the valley, but he survived after a long treatment. Tarabai kept the Marathas in such a high spirit at this time that even Khafi Khan, the Mughal historian had to admit her cleverness, and hold over the administration. She dispatched her forces to ransack the Mughal provinces as far as Sirnoj, Mandasor and Malwa, the last being their target in 1699. In 1703, a band of Marathas pounced upon Berar. Gujarat was ravaged in 1706 and the pillage of Baroda was a great success. In the summer of the same year, a big Maratha army menaced the Emperor's camp at Ahmadnagar, but withdrew after a long violent clash. Nature's fury like famine and epidemic also wrought havoc among the Mughal forces. Sudden flooding of Bhima river also took the toll of thousands of army men and cattle not to speak of the loss of equipment, furniture, tents etc. The beleaguered old Emperor himself offered prayer to ward off the calamity but in vain⁵⁸.

What is infinitely more important was that the Portuguese played their diplomatic role well to keep their territory of Goa safe from the clutches of all the suspected neighbours. The Mughal Subedar of Phonda had got constructed a fortress on the border of Bardez and had put Siddi Abdul as its in-charge as the Siddis were rated by them as the best to face the Marathas. No sooner Siddi Abdul took the charge, he started levying excessive taxes on goods-laden bullock-carts. When Khem Sawant Bhonsle raised the banner of revolt against the Mughals, he could not procure foodgrains from any quarters with the exception of the Portuguese. The Viceroy was concerned to see the Siddi dominating near his frontiers. Therefore, he diplomatically put it to him that in case Sawant seized the fort, he would be a trouble shooter only for the Mughals and the Portuguese and hence he should give idea about this imminent danger to his higher authorities. The obvious result of this was that the Siddi destroyed the fort and Khem Sawant got an opportunity to capture the fortresses of Bicholim (Dicholi) and Sankhali⁵⁹. Thus the Portuguese did away with the obstacle of Siddi representing Mughals by having a weak neighbour like Sawant.

True, the Portuguese had succeeded here by a subtle manoeuvring but now they were to tackle the bravest naval chief of the Marathas, Kanhoji Angria, who initially intercepted only the British vessels. Way back in 1702, a Calicut based vessel with six English men aboard had been seized by him. The authorities of the East India Company in Bombay registered their strong protest but nothing tangible

came out of it because Kanhoji was supreme in the sea as the Marathas were free on land during that period⁶⁰.

Kanhoji on account of increasing clout turned a natural adversary of the Siddis who till then had possessed several forts and territories of the Marathas along the coast. Kanhoji desired obeisance from all other powers to him and expected them to obtain his permission for trading in the coastal waters by purchasing duly endorsed passes from him. The obvious reaction to this stand was that he was challenged by other naval powers like the Portuguese who had the sway over the seas since long. It is hard to imagine that as early as in 1701 while battling against the Siddis, Kanhoji's provisions were in short supply and he had sought the help of the Portuguese General of the North, Pedro Vaz Soares. Realising that the Portuguese trade would remain safe from the Maratha raiders since the Portuguese were already against the Siddi, Pedro Vas Soares readily accepted the terms put forth by Kanhoji and the belligerence against each other stopped pending the approval of the pact by the Viceroy, Antonio Luis Gonsalves da Camara Coutinho. The parleys were kept a closely guarded secret but the Siddi somehow came to know about it. When the probe was sent by the Mughal authorities, the Goa government denied of holding any such dialogue and tried to clarify that if in reality any such thing had occurred at all, that might have been the handiwork of the General himself and he would be taken to task for the indiscipline. But the truth remains that the treaty with the Marathas through Angria was confirmed at the same time. But in order to avoid the strong reaction from

the Mughals it was mutually agreed upon in December 1701 that the accord should not be made public. Subsequently, the Portuguese ships sought shelter at the port of Rajapur and they were not only allowed to anchor, but even were escorted to Goa safely by the Marathas in view of the prevailing piracy⁶¹.

When the new Viceroy Caitano de Mello de Castro took over the charge of the Government in Goa in 1702, he found the Estado da India in peace with the Marathas. When Phonda and later the hill of Gadd (Goddo as called by the Portuguese) was seized by the Marathas, the Mughal Nawab of Phonda sought gunpowder, cannon balls, men and provisions from the Portuguese. The Viceroy dispatched to him only some ammunition secretly and excused himself for not supplying remaining requirements stating that his men were out of Goa, far away aboard the ships and in the forts, which was far from the truth. The Viceroy informed the King in Portugal that he had to give evasive reply to the Nawab under several concocted pretexts⁶².

To the chagrin of the Mughals, this attitude of the Portuguese further gave boost to the Marathas. As a result, the Portuguese were approached by many Maratha chieftains who sent letters to the Viceroy. Angria too wrote to him proposing a friendship by sending a vessel Balandra as a gift which he had earlier seized from the British. But the Viceroy was not willing to receive such a kind of gift and replied stating that it was neither his own, nor from the adversaries of the Portuguese, i.e. the Arabs, but it belonged

to a country friendly to the Portuguese. He also warned Kanhoji to mend his ways in future but permitted the sale of Balandra in Chaul. Kanhoji Angria who figures in the letter as Subedar of Shivaji, however was not so much perturbed over the insult as he had desired to get rid of the seized vessel⁶³. It clearly indicates that the Portuguese did recognise Angria's official status by the end of 1703. Kanhoji maintained amicable terms with the Portuguese for a few years, but seized all the ships which were found sailing in the sea without having his permits. When he gathered a sufficient naval force, he started defying the Portuguese by attacking their ships. It was in 1708 that he raided three Machuwas, captured one of them destroyed another one, while the third one had to withdraw. He got assassinated all the captives. The captain was spared only on extracting a ransom of 12,000 xerafins (ashrafis). Interestingly, shortly before this encounter, he had also made another prize of a Portuguese Pal going from Chaul to Bassein.⁶⁴ He must have got a rich treasure as the vessel had the retiring Governor of Chaul in it with his riches.

It may be observed that the Portuguese at this time were short of army personnel and not only the Angria troubled them, but Khem Sawant too had imprisoned some Portuguese subjects in his forts after having seized their two galiots, arms and ammunition and killing some of their men. The Siddi was already harassing them oft and on. Worse still, in 1708, a 2000-strong Arab fleet attacked their establishments at Onor (Honavar), Mangalore and Barcelore (Basrur). Curiously, prior to this incident, the Siddi too had ransacked the same

areas⁶⁵.

Small wonder then that the Portuguese Viceroy conveyed to the Mughal Emperor about the high-handedness and highly objectionable conduct of the Siddi. The Viceroy wrote again on 2nd September 1708 a long letter instructing to Father João de Abreu to convince the Mughal Emperor how Siddi of Danda being his trusted vassal had joined hands with Kanhoji Angria who had not only been a menace to the entire coast of the North but also a terror to the villages falling under the jurisdictions of the Portuguese and Mughals. He also added that since the Siddi had proved not only disloyal to the Portuguese but had betrayed his own Emperor lending help to his enemy by supplying arms and men, the Mughal Emperor should issue the order so that the Siddi did not help the Angria but would help only the Portuguese on the land and the sea. The instructions continue to state that the Mughal Emperor should also be convinced that the Nawab of Surat and the Siddi of Danda should not admit in their ports the Arabs who harm the Mughal interests and the Portuguese were ready to help him with their fleet to destroy all his enemies. He also desired that the attention of the Emperor was to be drawn to the fact that the Portuguese had helped the Sunda Raja against Khem Sawant and had taken over four small islands including Khorjuvem and Ponelem and some parts of Bardez, besides restoring the fortress of Bicholim to the Nawab of Mughal Emperor⁶⁶.

It may be recalled that Aurangzeb had passed away in March 1707. Prior to his death, he had observed that the

Marathas had defeated his armies every where. Aware of his impending death, he had written to his son Azam thus: "I came alone and am going alone. I have not done well to the country, and the people, and of the future there is no hope"⁶⁷.

As history bears out, the Mughal General Matabar Khan had neither forgotten nor forgiven the ruse played on him by the Portuguese in collusion with his adversaries in the imperial court. Now he felt more free after the death of Aurangzeb. The fact that even Koli Raja with a petty force at his disposal with the help of Matabar Khan and one Cacaji Naik could set afire several villages while besieging Caranja and Asserim speaks volumes about the constant decline of the Portuguese hold in India⁶⁸.

Given the kind of exposure at the Mughal Court, the Portuguese had put in a lot of diplomatic labour and had also secured Aurangzeb's Farmans besides Parwanas for seeking free entry for their goods at Surat, Baroach, Sind, Goga and Danda as they had managed to convince him about the Rajaram's complicity with the Siddi who had hoisted his flag in his fort and helped the Angria with arms, ships and men to rob despite getting rich gifts, supplies of Arab horses and Goan mangoes from the Portuguese for permitting them in his port. But after the death of Aurangzeb, the port of Surat had been closed for the Portuguese by the Mughal Nawab of Surat, who had also in 1694 demanded a very large amount to the tune of two million rupees for the captured vessels, though the actual assessment had come only to 60,000 xerafins⁶⁹.

In the aftermath of the death of Aurangzeb, Prince Muazzam succeeded him under the title of Bahadur Shah, also known as Shah Alam, after the violent battles with his brothers, Azam and Kam Baksh. Zulfiqar Khan advised him to release Shahu so that the Marathas would be divided. And the action did cause the division among them. Tarabai vehemently ruled out the affirmations of Shahu and it led to a prolonged war. Ultimately Shahu won principally on account of the help, counselling and courage of Balaji Vishwanath. Nevertheless, Shahu could not lay attention on Konkan and Tarabai on gathering a big army, with the help of the Sawants carved a seat of power for herself at Karvir (Kolhapur)⁷⁰.

The internecine war between the two, turned out to be advantageous for Kanhoji who made great strides in quick succession. Within a short span of time, he wielded such a power that he was virtually the supremo on the coastline from Sawantwadi to Bombay. He had exercised his control as far as the province of Kalyan. But he had to face several hurdles too. Siddi of Janjira, the Sawants of Wadi, the English, the Dutch stationed at Vengurla and the Portuguese were on his trail all around. Simultaneously, he had to counter Shahu's forces because he had openly supported Tarabai. Probably the death of Aurangzeb, encouraged Kanhoji to lay siege to the fortress of Sagargarh. He soon seized it before monsoon of 1707 as is obvious from the secret information filed by Muhammad Yusuf from Danda-Rajpuri where he had been recruited by Aurangzeb as Waqqi Nigar⁷¹.

Within three years, to the utter disbelief of the Europeans on the Western coast, Kanhoji could compound their

problems with ease. In 1710, he seized a Dutch ship, and also intercepted a British vessel in the vicinity of Bombay. Though he suffered defeat at the hands of the British, his clout was not affected as we observe him seizing British Governor's ships Samuel and Mary besides another vessel Anne from Karwar, two years later. However, before the end of 1712, he attempted to better his ties with the British and by February 1713, he was found having perfectly friendly relations with them. As a result, he consented to return their seized vessels and captives and assured them that he would not intercept the ships of the British and other European powers sailing towards Bombay through Mahim and Khandari. He also allowed them access in his ports on payment of prevailing customs duties. The British on the other hand also pledged that they would not deploy any ships with their colours and permitted Angria's ships to sail freely in Bombay port to purchase and dispose of the goods on payment of usual levies. However, the British declined to provide him gunpowder and cannon balls. But at the same time, they responded to permit the sailors and residents of Bombay, if they desired to enlist themselves in his services⁷².

The inference obviously is that the Angria had the liberty to decide about any ships of other countries falling outside the demarcated area which figured in the agreement. On the other hand, he being the supporter of Tarabai, continued to challenge Shahu so successfully that he annexed his regions by seizing the fortresses of Lohgarh, Tung and Tikona and even took into custody Shahu's Peshwa, Bhairopant Pingle. This daring operation was possible because of the

revival of the feudalistic trends during Rajaram's rule when the army and naval officers enjoyed certain privileges and liberty as they were not paid servants of the state. Hence they frequently seized the opportunities of arrogating maximum possible authority on land and sea. It is no surprise that Kanhoji too fell in the same category. Though initially he backed Tarabai in the civil war, practically he enjoyed independence in dealing with the administrative matters. Therefore even the British in 1704 branded him as the 'Rebel independent of Raja Sivajee'. He actually received no orders from his King, who was merely a figure-head. Neither did he restrict his activities to the sea. He had built up a strong army on land also. In all likelihood it was because of Balaji Viswanath's goodwill and conciliatory approach he veered slowly towards Shahu⁷³.

Another still more valid reason may be adduced for his change of mind. As Kanhoji himself had several rivals, he was convinced that Shahu had the upper hand over the ruling family of Kolhapur. He therefore opted for the amity with Shahu because he could no longer continue to wage war alone against his strong armies. Moreover, Balaji guaranteed him that he would help him to meet his all claims. Therefore, ultimately he acquiesced in early 1714 for a firm pact between him and Shahu on the actions on the land and sea. Balaji personally negotiated the pact with him at Valvan, near Lonavala, which was subsequently assented by Shahu, prior to its ratification by both of them --- Shahu and Kanhoji at Kolaba on 8th February 1714. Consequently, the former Peshwa, Bhairopant Pingle was freed and Kanhoji

gave up his recently annexed regions. But he secured in turn Rajmachi and 26 other forts, besides the island of Khanderi. Kanhoji finally even expressed his fealty to Shahu at Satara during the Holi festival in 1715⁷⁴. Thus, the treaty clearly delineated the areas of both of them and strengthened the ground for mutual defence and cooperation.

It is naive to believe that the Portuguese were not active. In fact, in 1708 Antonio Cardim Froes was instructed to launch an attack against the Angria in retaliation of the lost ships. However, this Captain was stunned by the pre-emptive action of Sarkhel Kanhoji resulting into his retreat⁷⁵. The war with the Portuguese, however, continued. With their well-trained soldiers and better armoury, the Portuguese too carried on the war relentlessly. But the losses inflicted on them by the Angria had totally demoralised them because he lost no opportunity to pounce upon their ships whenever occasion arose. In a letter dated 26th May 1710, the Portuguese Captain of Chaul admitted that his outpost at Chaul was in a miserable condition owing to the continuous war against the Angria. Not only was it in short supply of provisions, but the people too had fled away in large numbers to Danda, Bombay and other places. As a result, the Portuguese trade there as well as elsewhere suffered a lot⁷⁶.

As was only to be expected, the Portuguese Viceroy had sent a present (Saguate) to the new Mughal Emperor, Shah Alam, to earn his goodwill and got commandership (Fauzdari) of Phonda for subduing Khem Sawant who had earlier occupied

the Mughal territories⁷⁷. The Portuguese felt rather relieved now that they were being heard in the Mughal Court. Besides this favourable development, the Viceroy informed the Crown in a letter dated 4th December 1710 that the Portuguese had succeeded in punishing the Koli Raja, the Siddi and the Mughal Nawab of Kalyan, Matabar Khan, mainly on account of the frigate 'Alto Bordo' under the command of General Francisco Pereira da Silva. He regretted however his failure to deal with the Angria⁷⁸.

Of course, the Siddi now was no more powerful as he had been earlier. Both Siddi Khairiyat and Siddi Qassim, known for their bravery had passed away and their successors were no more favourites of the Mughal Emperor who was engrossed in the politics of North India in the Portuguese eyes. However, the Siddi had been replaced by the Angria. That's the reason why they tried their level best to get favourable royal orders through the highly influential Portuguese lady of remarkable intelligence and virtuous skills, Dona Juliana Dias da Costa, who could not do much diplomatic work for the Portuguese during Aurangzeb's reign. She was now with Shah Alam and had the privilege to reside in the Red Fort of Delhi and had intimate relations with the new Emperor. Shah Alam too sent customary present (Saguate) via Daman for the Portuguese Viceroy expressing his desire to have the coat of arms which the Portuguese Kings used to wear stylishly in the battlefields. The royal desire also included to get a curved sword⁷⁹.

It is important at the outset to emphasize that Shah

Alam had been in Goa and knew well the importance of a naval force. He planned to raise a modernised fleet under the able guidance of a French General. The news reached the King of Portugal and he soon directed his Viceroy at Goa in a letter dated the 29th September 1710 to use the services of Dona Juliana Dias in the Mughal Court by writing to her to act to reverse the said decision as the new fleet would prove very harmful for the Portuguese interests⁸⁰.

Though it is not known how far Dona Juliana Dias succeeded in her attempt to make Shah Alam abandon his plan to raise the said fleet, it is certain that she was in high esteem of the Emperor and the Portuguese Viceroy utilised her services constantly almost like an embassy. It was only owing to Juliana's strong influence on Shah Alam that not only the Portuguese goods were freely allowed to enter in all the Mughal ports but the Governor of Surat (Amanata Khan) who had proved very hostile to the Portuguese and had closed the port of Surat for them, was removed from his office by the Emperor⁸¹.

In the light of the foregoing considerations, the commercial concessions gained by the Portuguese must have been a great relief for their sliding economy which had been recently shattered by Kanhoji Angria. The Portuguese described the Angria as most prejudicial enemy to their state in 1712. The war of succession to the Mughal throne had further given a jolt to the Mughal authority which had already suffered a lot during Aurangzeb's Deccan wars. When Shah Alam too died in 1712, the bloody war erupted again

among the claimants to the Mughal throne. It gave a further blow to the already sinking empire. A letter dated the 14th January, 1714 written by the Viceroy to the King discloses that Dona Juliana had got entry in the Mughal Court during the Vicerolty of Conde de Alvor (1681-86) who had sent to the Mughal Court a Portuguese Surgeon with whom she subsequently married and remained in the company of all the Mughal kings since then. The Viceroy continued to state that she had done her best for protecting the interests of the Portuguese State. Of late, during the war of succession, her property was confiscated, though the same had been restored to her later on. She then had desired to purchase a village in the North (Chaul and Bassein)⁸³.

In view of the changed scenario resulting out of the war of succession among the Mughal Princes, the Portuguese Viceroy had to suspend all the correspondence to the Court in Delhi. The winning heir apparent was reported to be in Agra at this time in search of his nephews. When he ascended the throne under the name of Jahandar Shah, a present (Saguate) with the necessary letter was sent by the Viceroy and the Portuguese expected that old status of Dona Juliana would be restored in the Mughal Court. She had already amassed an huge wealth and had invested an amount of 90,000 Pagodes for the purchase of a village in the North out of what was restored to her in the form of jewels worth 3,45,000 Pagodes⁸⁴.

As expected, the Portuguese economy however did not recover owing to various reasons including the rampant corruption at all levels, rise of the British authority and

the piracy in Indian waters. Their trade had come almost to a halt and the King's letter written on 9th March 1715 to the Viceroy reflects the same. The King therefore directed the Viceroy Vasco Fernandes Cezar de Menezes not to send the customary gift to the Mughal King on his arrival in Goa as was done in the past by his predecessor and advised him to send him only the greetings⁸⁵. The King further wrote him not to send the present (Saguate) to the Mughal King on his succession to the throne. It is apparent that the Portuguese King could not grasp the due importance of these gifts and the Viceroy had to write to the Crown on 16th January 1716 stating that the contents of its two letters received by him from Lisbon were untenable because the practice of sending Saguate in Asia was indispensable and Fr. Joseph de Silva was already in Bassein returning from the Mughal Court not only with Mughal Saguate but also various Farmans and Parwanas. He further stated that it was for these reasons that it would be convenient if the Crown left such matters to be disposed of by the Viceroy himself in the interests of the State. He further apprised him that there was no dominant power in Asia which did not recognise this old fashioned tradition of mode of expression of these lands and the congratulations in particular were always accompanied by the presents whenever the deal was struck between the Kings⁸⁶.

The King's instructions give a fair idea of the fast dwindling economy of the Portuguese in India at that juncture, as presenting even a gift in Asian style and that too to the Grand Mughal on his coronation was certainly a

very costly proposition for them. However, the gift had already been sent by the Viceroy much before the royal letter was received in Goa. The Viceroy Vasco Fernandes Cezar de Menezes having obtained the diplomatic information from the missionary, Fr. Joseph da Silva wrote to Dona Juliana in 1715 to continue her work in the Mughal Court with the same zeal for protecting the Portuguese interests there⁸⁷.

And here it may be observed that Dona Juliana had done so well during Shah Alam's reign that the Viceroy had specifically instructed Fr. Silva on 2nd November 1712 to get issued the royal Farmans early so that his Nawabs and captains did not help in any way the Koli Raja and the Angria. He had also instructed him to convince the Mughal Emperor by all possible means about the distrustful nature of Kanhoji Angria by poisoning his mind about his collusion with the Marathas (Sivajees) whose Queen (Tarabai) had made him her feudatory by granting the fort of Antekeri. The Viceroy further advised him to take the help of Dona Juliana to whom he was sending a separate letter alongwith the royal letter⁸⁸.

On the other hand, an element of surprise was that Shahu's progress on land had improved considerably because the Mughals had to tackle their other adversaries in north India. Balaji Vishwanath who was initially recruited in 1708 as a ordinary revenue clerk (Carcoon) by Dhanaji Jadhav later rose up to become chief of the military organisation and had been ultimately nominated Peshwa on 16th November 1713.

Balaji contributed significantly to solidify Shahu's authority and position. He secured important concessions from Husain Ali (Deputy Governor of Patna) who in order to win over the Marathas on his side had signed a treaty with them in 1714. According to the conditions laid down therein, Shahu was to possess all the areas that had originally come under the hegemony of Shivaji and had been conquered subsequently by the Mughals. Moreover, he was to be handed over the provinces of Khandesh, Gondwana, Berar and the districts in Hyderabad and Karnataka, which had been annexed by the Marathas. Besides, the right of collection of the 'Chauth' and 'Sardeshmukhi' of the six provinces of the Deccan were to be granted to Shahu who was to raise 15,000-strong cavalry for Mughal service and pay the Empire Rs.10,00000 as annual contribution. Shahu was also supposed to supervise the law and order situation in the Deccan⁸⁹. Thus what it boiled down to was that although Shahu admitted the suzerainty of the Emperor in contrast to the lofty ideal of independent entity nurtured by his grandfather, Shivaji, he had been successful in having a greater political mileage practically. Therefore, the treaty is widely considered as an important milestone in Maratha history as the Marathas and Mughals shared the revenue collection of the provinces under Mughal control.

Amidst all this, the rapid rise of Kanhoji had already posed a great threat to the Portuguese. In 1712, he had virtually paralysed the whole Portuguese trade by immobilising the frigate captained by Dom Luis da Costa, the nephew of the Viceroy. Besides, he had seized around forty

Parangues and had compelled their second frigate to retreat. The trading community of Goa had invested their substantial capital in the voyage of this fleet and its loss further contributed to the swelling of Kanhoji's treasury⁹⁰.

To add to the list of woes, this humiliation on the part of the Angria had disconcerted the Portuguese so much that even the General of the North, Luis de Mello was compelled not to stop his brother Lopo de Mello, from buying Kanhoji's permit for the safety of his goods-laden vessels. The General in order to regain the lost reputation tried to raid the Angria's lands despite the warning from the Viceroy that he should do so after the arrival of the special fleet which could combat Kanhoji's vessels with ease. The end result was the humiliating defeat of the General by a much smaller naval force, and the ultimate defeat. This also led the General to lose his command as well as the ill-planned operation till the verdict of the High Court for his misconduct was given⁹¹.

In the following year, Kanhoji intercepted a merchant fleet sailing under the protection of three frigates, four Pals, two Machuas and one Pataxo which led to the fierce battle for a couple of days resulting into the casualties and loss on both the sides. In the aftermath of this naval action, the Viceroy desired to step up the pressure on Kanhoji Angria and Captain-in-Chief Antonio Cardim Froes was ordered to blockade Kolaba with a view to provoke Kanhoji for an open battle but the latter shrewdly kept his fleet off the range of the Portuguese gun fire. After a long wait of three

months, Antonio hastily returned in the wake of the presence of the Arab fleet at Surat⁹².

Given this context, by this time Dona Juliana had managed to secure Farmans from the Mughal Emperor ensuring the Siddi's help to the Portuguese and as a result, it is observed that Kanhoji was engaged in fight with the Siddi in 1714. Since the Portuguese too helped the Siddi, Kanhoji could not harm their vessels that year. On the contrary, he sent peace proposals to the Viceroy, though the latter did not accept the offer⁹³.

The most obvious manifestation of this was that the Portuguese employed all the means at their disposal to enlist the Siddi's support against the Angria. The secret documents reveal that Luis de Mello, Portuguese Naval Commander and General of the North had captured some men of the Siddi and it was only after receiving a complaint from the latter that the Viceroy directed the General of the North in December 1712 to release his men expecting the Siddi to reciprocate the same by not helping the Angria in any way⁹⁴.

However, contrary to the expectations, Kanhoji often got help from the Siddi and Mughal Nawab posted at Chaul de Cima (Upper Chaul) against the Portuguese. He had devastated Portuguese lands a number of times and the Viceroy in August 1712 had sent special instructions to Luis de Mello to keep a strict vigil on the movements of the 'negro' i.e negro as the Portuguese used to call Angria with contempt, would certainly attack their villages with the help of Siddi of Danda and the

Mughal Nawab of Chaul⁹⁵. The British were already holding parleys with the Angria to sign the pact with him, which was not to the liking of the Portuguese. The Viceroy even expressed his displeasure in a letter dated 20th February 1713 to the Captain of Bassein, Dom Antonio Casco e Mello, stating that only the English could open such a despicable and disgraceful negotiations of making peace with the Angria⁹⁶.

Dona Juliana further succeeded in fetching many royal favours for the Portuguese. As per the Farmans brought by Fr. Joseph de Silva to Goa, the Portuguese now were to pay only 2% duties on goods in the Mughal ports instead of the usual 6%. There was also a Parwana directing the Siddi to help the Portuguese whenever the need arose. They also came to know that the Mughal Emperor had transferred the fort of Phonda in Goa and its lands to the Portuguese. The village of Madcai yielding a revenue to the tune of 80,000 Pagoda was also to be given to the Portuguese. According to her letter, Mughal General Hasan Alikhan had also been deputed to put an end to the disorders on the western coast. Accordingly, the General began taking strong measures against the Mughal Subedar of the Deccan, and the Portuguese were hopeful that he would take the similar action against the 'pirate' Angria. But they were quite apprehensive that Angria could even bribe the said General. Whether Angria bribed him or not is not known, but the General left soon thereafter and there was no visible change in Angria's attitude towards the Portuguese⁹⁷. In the meanwhile, Hasan Ali Khan demanded Rs.80,000 for handing over Phonda and its

lands to the Portuguese. This is revealed by the Viceroy Dom Luis de Menezes, Conde de Ericeira in the letter he wrote on 6th January 1719⁹⁸. Obviously, by this time, the corruption among the Mughal chieftains had been deep-rooted and rampant. The Portuguese Viceroy predicted that the great empire of the Mughals would be ruined as each one of his chief Amirs had 50,000 or 80,000 or 100,000 horses under their charge. He reacted thus when the royal Farman for handing over Phonda to the Portuguese was not respected by Hasan Ali Khan⁹⁹.

However, Kanhoji's clashes with the Siddi continued throughout 1714, but owing to his (Angria's) signing peace pact with the English and the arrival of the replenished contingents under the Peshwa forced the Siddi to climb down and he had to prepare for an armistice with the Angria in the following year (1715) consequent upon the great losses on land and leaving the Portuguese alone to face Kanhoji Angria¹⁰⁰.

Therefore, the Portuguese had no other option than to look towards Sambhaji of Kolhapur for aid. After holding the negotiations with him in this respect, they decided on an offensive and defensive alliance on 23rd March 1716 with him against their common foe, the Angria who had betrayed the cause of Kolhapur by joining hands with Shahu. Accordingly, both agreed to provide facilities to each other in their ports. Narba Sawant Bhonsle, Desai of Kudal, was not to be assisted by the Portuguese against Sambhaji who could take gunpowder and shots on payment from the Portuguese against the Angria. Sambhaji was also allowed to send a ship

to bring horses from Basra or from Congo and his vessels from Melondim (Malwan) could go to the North under the Portuguese flags. Sambhaji also promised to hand over the Portuguese goods and two galiots captured earlier by the former captains of Melondim. The Portuguese were to assist him in recovering his fortresses on the Konkan coast, and in particular that of Griem¹⁰¹ (Vijaydurg).

Motivated by such a consciousness to subdue Kanhoji Angria, the Viceroy also induced Fond Sawant Bhonsle of Kudal to join him against him (Kanhoji). The Portuguese were ready to supply him the sufficient quantity of gunpowder and shots for the purpose. However, both Sambhaji of Kolhapur and Fond Sawant Bhonsle were not of much help to the Portuguese against the powerful Angria whose fleet dominated the sea boldly defying the navies of all others capturing trading vessels of all nations which did not acquire the permits from him. Ultimately the Viceroy approached the British in November 1716 and tried to convince them that Kanhoji was not a reliable man and stuck to any treaty as long as it suited his own interests. They were also told that only a few days back, Kanhoji had seized a Sibar and some galleys belonging to the residents of Bombay and that he was exploiting the rivalry prevailing between the European nations to his own advantage and to their ultimate ruin. The British too seized a Sibar of Kanhoji in Mahim, and attacked his coastal towns but could achieve practically nothing. However, thereafter the British busied themselves in preparing their fleets for future action against him¹⁰².

The Portuguese on the other hand continued their efforts to seek the backing of the Mughals against the Siddi and Nawab of Kalyan, who had misinformed Mughal Emperor that the Portuguese had been converting the Muslims forcibly. The Viceroy on his part dispatched letters to the Mughal Court in 1715 informing that the Siddi had already signed a treaty of amity with Kanhoji¹⁰³. In the same year, the Viceroy also tried to put a stop to the annual subsidy to the Siddi from the Mughals for safeguarding the trade of Surat and pilgrims proceeding to Mecca. Later on he even preferred as a last resort an alliance with Kanhoji against the Siddi¹⁰⁴.

Not to be outdone, in 1717, Bartholmeu de Mello, Captain General of the North, made an attempt to block the ports of Angria, but the latter retaliated by laying waste the Portuguese areas specially the villages of Salcete, Goa, namely Cuncolim, Veroda, Madgaon and Navelim plundering property worth 500,000 xerafins. Also, Kanhoji's fleet pounced upon 15 Portuguese Parangues carrying food provisions. Two pals of the Angria's fleet, near the island of Anjediv carried on the combat till night and then returned with no damage¹⁰⁵.

In an interesting development, Kanhoji's relations with the British were going from bad to worse fast. In March 1718, his naval men seized one more British ship from Bengal and gave the cruel treatment to its crew. The fresh incident shocked the British authorities in Bombay and the incensed Governor directed all his armed ships to capture or destroy wherever possible any of Angria's vessels. The Angria

intimated to them to hold parleys and for a couple of months, acrimonious exchange of correspondence persisted between both the parties. Ultimately, it led to the declaration of war by the English in the summer of 1718. The British Governor, Mr. Boone personally led an assault on Khanderi. But the few soldiers of the Angria resisted so well that the British ships had to retreat as quickly as possible. The Governor then resorted to the blockade of Kolaba for a few days but it was futile¹⁰⁶.

By now the Angria's stock in the eyes of everybody had gone up very much because his fleet now had more than forty warships of varied sizes and his navy comprised of the most daring and adventurous sailors including Christian deserters most of whom were the Dutch, Portuguese, Arabs, Muslims and the Negroes. All of them had sought his shelter on account of his exploits which offered them better prospects¹⁰⁷.

Naturally, therefore the British as well as the Portuguese, were left with no alternative than to unite against their common foe. Both the European powers had been so impatient with his actions that they were seriously thinking to launch a joint onslaught against him. When the British, late in 1718, pleaded for such a joint venture, the Portuguese Viceroy Dom Luis de Meneses, Conde de Ericeira welcomed it. He even thought of putting to use the services of the Siddis against the Angria. The Viceroy volunteered to keep his entire army as well as a powerful squadron of warships in the North at the disposal of the British. But the Portuguese were not so sure of the combating attributes

of the British soldiers and mariners. Therefore, the Portuguese Viceroy desired that his contingent be let in the fort of Mahim before the treaty of alliance was concluded. He also guaranteed that he would not sign a separate peace pact with the Angria. If this was not acceptable, he was ready to deposit an amount of Rs. One lakh with a reputed person of financial standing with his residence in the Portuguese occupied area, who could be acceptable to both the parties. The British however were suspicious of the proposals and therefore declined to accept them. The deal came to a deadlock primarily because of the mutual mistrust between the two powers and the suspicion which lurked in the mind of the Portuguese Viceroy, Conde de Ericeira that the Angria had procured in the near past his artillery and ammunition from the British in Bombay. He also held the belief that no sooner the Angria-Portuguese encounter could start, the British would stealthily disappear from the scene. At this juncture he had also witnessed the paucity of troops in Bombay. Therefore this sort of situation ultimately led to the fizzling out of the conclusion of the treaty. The English were however bent upon to pull down Vijaydurg, later on christened by them as the Victory Fort. Their new fleet under the command of Walter Brown sailed near Vijaydurg on the 19th September 1720. The Portuguese Viceroy too with a lot of secrecy managed to send a fleet for a surprise raid as he was aware that the vessels of the Angria had been lying anchored in his port without the crew. He also instructed the General of the North to be ready to march to Chaul with his all troops. But in this encounter, the British could destroy only the ships that were anchored ashore. As for the

Portuguese navy though it was under the Commander Cardim Froes, known for his knowledge of the region, and recognised even by Kanhoji for his gallantry could do nothing except chasing the Angrian fleets and proved no efficacious than the British. Thus the loose and unattached joint attack against Kolaba and Vijaydurg flopped miserably¹⁰⁸.

But presumably as a result of the threat from the combine, Kanhoji again proposed peace pact with the Portuguese but the Viceroy rejected it. The enraged Kanhoji then threatened him in the summer of 1720 that he was not afraid to confront him in the field with his 20,000 troops and that he should better go in for amicable settlement. He also pointed an accusing finger against the Viceroy for his aggressiveness. Alarmed by the tone of the language, the Viceroy was now eager to join hands with the British who were ready for the support from any quarter to vanquish Kanhoji. By 1721, the Angria had occupied several coastal areas between Goa and Bombay with the sole exception of the strongholds of the Siddi. The end result of the disastrous inefficacy of the joint efforts of the two European powers was obvious. The Angria claimed himself to be the supreme on the western sea and this was recognised by all. This is revealed by the Portuguese Viceroy who wrote to the Crown on 22nd January 1721 that all the vessels of the North were opting to ply with his permits for the reason of safety. He even went to the extent of collecting the levies to the tune of Rs.7 lakhs from the coastal villages of North Konkan¹⁰⁹.

Thus we see that after the death of Shivaji, his son Sambhaji fought on all fronts against the Siddis, Portuguese

and the Mughals. He, however, had no adequate time to consolidate his power and administration. The traitors and renegades played their own roles, but he did not lose hopes even while being tortured in several ways prior to his death.

His tragic end united the Marathas as never before. The United Marathas not only repelled the Mughal attack time and again but they also launched a number of counter-attacks effectively, which ultimately caused the downfall of the Mughal empire and establishment of the Swaraj. Marathas consequently consolidated their position under Shahu's most powerful Peshwa Balaji Vishwanath who in 1719 marched right upto Delhi with Sayyid Husain Ali as the Emperor was desiring to get rid of Sayyid brothers and was not well disposed towards the treaty Husain Ali had signed with the Marathas earlier in 1714. The allied forces deposed Farrukhsiyar and enthroned another puppet, Rafi-ud-Darjat, who confirmed the treaty. The march of Maratha troops under Balaji Vishwanath to Delhi is one of the most significant events in the history of India. They played the crucial role in shaping the destiny of India and secured the right of collecting Chauth and Sardeshmukhi in the vast regions of the country. Kanhoji Angria was another warrior who had gone up to unprecedented heights never achieved before by any Indian on its waters. Though Balaji Vishwanath died early in 1720, he was replaced by his equally illustrious son Peshwa Baji Rao I who proved to be not only very able and brave warrior but also displayed the qualities of a mature statesman and shrewd diplomat. He persuaded his master to adopt altogether a new policy by stating: "Let us strike at the trunk of the withering tree. The branches will fall off themselves. Thus should the Maratha flag fly from the Krishna to the Indus"¹¹⁰.

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CHAPTER V

THE VICTORIOUS CAMPAIGNS OF THE MARATHAS AGAINST THE SIDDIS AND THE PORTUGUESE (1720-1740).

It may be recalled that the rights and privileges of the Marathas had been duly recognised by the Mughal Emperor of Delhi in 1720. Accordingly, Konkan figured in the Swaraj where only the Marathas were expected to wield their power. The Chitnis was entrusted with the vast allotment in the Konkan region while Kanhoji holding on to portion already conceded by Shahu appeared invincible to all the powers in his neighbourhood¹.

The Siddis, however, still were clinging to the notable fortresses of Raigarh, Mahad, Dabhol, Anjanvel, Gowalkot and Ratnagiri besides other coastal fortifications like Revas, Thal etc. Anjanvel had assumed importance because now the Siddis had started their raiding operations in order to trouble the naval activities and territories of Marathas².

Since the Angria had realised that the Mughals would pose no danger to him, he had to tackle only the Europeans more seriously. Both the British as well as the Portuguese were chalking out their plans afresh to curtail his power which had paralysed their trade activities seriously. They had never witnessed such a deprivation from an Indian navy before. The Portuguese Viceroy in 1721 with a view to regain the lost clout, replenished his fleet in the North by inducting in it two well-equipped frigates. Another crusading naval force was kept at the disposal of the Commander

Antonio Cardim Froes, specially selected for the task, he being well-versed in naval tactics. While getting ready for the assault, the Portuguese pretended that their mobilisation was targetted at the British who at that time had irritated the Portuguese by driving out of the island of Bombay their missionaries. The ruse helped because the British also alerted their navy for emergency. The Portuguese in fact wanted to launch the sudden attack against the Angria in the early hours on the appointed day but the whole strategy ran into trouble as only thirteen ships out of 76-ship fleet could arrive near the fort of Angria as planned. Being helpless and they being prone to his gun fire on account of the proximity were forced to abandon the move. However, subsequently, the Viceroy realised that the fort was garrisoned by only 140 soldiers. The disillusioned Viceroy then appointed an inquiry committee to probe into the inefficacy of the well-drawn plan³. He now was left with the only option of inviting the British, but Kanhoji again deputed Frey Verississimo proposing his terms for peace. However, the Viceroy was in no mood to listen to him. The talks for concluding a treaty with the British were already on as is evident from a letter dated 10th January 1721. Both the European powers, tired of Angria's menace, were now restless to act⁴.

As a first step in this direction, a treaty was signed between the British and the Portuguese on 20th August 1721. A week later the British fleet touched Bombay from London. The treaty stipulating 14 articles reveal that the

allied forces were confident of their success and with this in view even the conditions of sharing equally the war booty in future was included in the treaty. Both the powers had agreed to hand over Kolaba to the Portuguese, and Gheria (Vijaydurg) was to be taken over by the British⁵.

The developments took such a fast turn that the Viceroy himself proceeded to Chaul within two days on 22nd August commanding a fleet of four frigates and six pals. Ten days later, the General of the North as well as some British naval ships joined him on 2nd September. The Portuguese contingents from Daman and other places in the North as well as the British troops of 2400 men from Bombay arrived there before 10th September to swell the strength of the allies to 6000 infantry and 125 horse. Recently arrived British fleet commanded by Thomas Mathew also joined the joint campaign⁶.

As a retaliatory measure, Angria hurriedly arranged provisions and ammunitions in the fort of Kolaba and sent a word to Shahu for the succour. The crossing of the Kundalika river and the march towards Kolaba with heavy guns delayed the arrival of the allied forces in the vicinity of the fort for over a fortnight and this breathing time was adequate enough for Pilaji Jadhav and Baji Rao to rush to battle scene. By 12th December, the allied forces were sighted before Kolaba and later on they realised that they were to face a much larger force of 25000 men with considerably high grade cavalry of the Angria. On reaching there, while the Portuguese commander was surveying the field alongwith Mathews, a Maratha soldier who had waited in ambush pounced

upon Mathews and wounded him with his lance. The Viceroy soon after the arrival fell ill and had retired till recuperated. In the meanwhile, while 500 Englishmen pounded the fort for four hours, the Portuguese tried to control the Marathas settled in the camps outside. But Baji Rao in a swift move swooped upon the Portuguese and chased them away. The British column which was invading the fort was repulsed so fiercely, that they had no option than to retreat. While withdrawing too, the Portuguese troops were threatened and they had to abandon the huge quantity of war material for the benefit of Marathas. Baji Rao exuding optimism offered the peace proposals on behalf of Angria in the very beginning of January 1722, which were ultimately accepted by the Portuguese Viceroy with a pinch of salt⁷.

Elaborating on this, the Portuguese Viceroy Francisco José Sampaio e Castro while writing to the Secretary of State in Lisbon, João Roiz Machado on 8th January 1722 admitted that it was impossible to pass through the river owing to the fortifications built up by the Angria across the river. He explained further that Shahu's General, Baji Rao, soon sent him a word that since the Angria was a vassal of his master and had promised to proceed to Satara to pay him homage, he could not be denied the desired assistance⁸. Though Baji Rao offered to negotiate the peace and the Viceroy too readily agreed, the negotiations continued for several days before the peace treaty was signed between the Viceroy and Baji Rao on 22nd January 1722. It insisted upon the Portuguese that they would not escort the vessels of the enemies of the Marathas

and assist them against the common foes who were at loggerheads with them. The ports of both the sides were to provide free access to the traders of either party. The Portuguese assured the supply of the ammunition to the Peshwa at a fair price. Both the parties also agreed to return to each other the captured vessels⁹. Thus like all hopeful and powerful delusions, this war came to an abrupt end.

The Viceroy Francisco José de Sampaio e Castro while describing in November 1722 the incidents of battle to the Crown acknowledged the fact that the peace proposal of Baji Rao was of great consequence to the Estado da India because it was impossible to gain anything against the skilled army of Kanhoji and it was unwise to provoke hostilities against the entire country which in turn would have exposed the Portuguese territories to the similar danger posed during the period of Conde de Alvor when Shahu's father Sambhaji had invaded their possessions in November 1683¹⁰. That's the reason why he had promptly accepted the peace proposed by Baji Rao and not by the Angria.

Against such a grim backdrop the British did not appreciate the contents of the signed treaty by the Portuguese and ultimately found themselves losers. They too had desired to take the benefit of the peace treaty and it had nothing to offer to them. Ironically, what they got was only a copy of the peace treaty which required to be ratified by them within a week. The British were not in a mood to oblige. So, in resentment they hurried back to Bombay with their ships. They in fact accused the Portuguese Viceroy for

agreed to the first clause of the peace treaty, which forbade the conclusion of any peace treaty with the Angria, whereas left to themselves they had to deal only with him. The Viceroy justified his action by informing them that the peace treaty was signed with Shahu Raja through his General, Baji Rao and not with the Angria and thus both the allies had been treated on equal footing. The Viceroy was fully aware of the factual position that the Portuguese contribution in men and money to the short-lived war was much higher than that of the British. However, he appeared to be happier to see the British in such a tight situation, and he conveyed this guess of his to the Crown in Lisbon revealing that the British would require a fresh contingent of 1500 soldiers from England as Company's factories could not be safeguarded in Asia without that additional force¹¹.

By and large this indifferent attitude clearly indicates that there did not exist genuine and clear-cut understanding between the two European powers in India and both desired each other's downfall at this time. The treaty in a way boosted the morale of the Angria bringing him an immense prestige and he was more free now to capture any ship of any power which as a power to be reckoned with did not buy his permit or did not have diplomatic relations with him. He started maintaining now cordial relations with the Portuguese, who in the following year sent a copy of the document addressed to Ramchandra Pant ratifying the signed treaty assuring him restoration of all the prisoners of war¹².

Interestingly, the Mughal Emperor Muhammad Shah was facing the immense trouble from the Sayyid brothers --- Sayyad Hasan Ali and Sayyad Abdulla --- whom the other chiefs as well wanted to get rid of. Asaf Jah later known as Nizam-ul-Mulk in the Deccan played his cards well. The net result was that Sayyad Husan Ali was slain while he was attempting to inflict punishment to the Nizam. On the other hand, Sayyad Abdulla was imprisoned to the rejoicings of the people in Delhi. In February 1722, Nizam-ul-Mulk was summoned to his Court by the Emperor Muhammad Shah who made him his Prime Minister. However, the atmosphere was not conducive for him in Delhi. He soon returned to the Deccan and established himself as an independant, though he showed his regard to the imperial authority till his last days. As a known romantic ruler, Muhammad Shah busied himself in the worldly pleasures despite being lucky enough to occupy the throne for a long period. However, one by one, the Deccan, Oudh and Bengal began to rule as independent ignoring his rule. While the Sikhs became active in Punjab and the Jats near Agra, the Rohillas, the descendants of Afghans also rose high and founded Ruhelkhand. Under this bizarre scenario, Baji Rao invaded Malwa in December 1723. He had the ideal of Hindu Raj (Hindu-pad-Padshahi) before him and the local Hindu landlords (Zamindars) fully backed him there though they suffered a lot of loss in men, material and wealth¹³.

In the meanwhile, the rift between Kanhoji and the British had widened. The former had captured two British Pals in March 1722 in the daring action that was masterminded between Chaul and Rajpuri in which one pal was set afire

while the other slipped. He also took into his custody another British vessel carrying a large number of coins and rich merchandise. The British too retaliated and seized one of his ships. But in October, Kanhoji himself sailed off with the force of 500 men from Kolaba entrusting the fort with his eldest son and announcing that he would not return without eliminating the British authority. But it turned out to be a misadventure because the Portuguese refused to oblige him to conclude a offensive treaty, though he was inclined to give whatever financial aid the Viceroy might demand. The Portuguese shrewdly and diplomatically avoided the risk because after the elimination of the British, it could have been their turn to leave the soil of Indian sub-continent. Again in 1724, he made a fresh bid to rope in the new Governor of Bombay, Phipps, to initiate negotiations. He requested him to send an authorised representative negotiating on a peace treaty. Phipps not only rejected his request, but also accused him of indulging in piracy. Kanhoji retorted: "it little behoved merchants to say that his government was supported by violence, insults and piracies, for the great Shivaji founded his kingdom by making war against four kings, and that he himself was but his humble disciple and was very much willing to favour the merchants trading according to the laws of his country, and offered to release the British prisoners". The parleys for the treaty however did go on and an exchange of POWs took place finally in 1725. Soon thereafter, Kanhoji had to tackle the serious problem created by the Siddi who had arrived near Kolaba fort with a big fleet. Angria was not confident to confront him on the sea. So he settled with the

Siddi allegedly offering him a substantial amount in silver¹⁴. Though nothing is known about this alleged strange deal with the Siddi, one still gets the clue from the repeated complaints made by the Portuguese to the Mughal Emperor about an unusual understanding between the Angria and the Siddi. Under the circumstances, it would not be wrong to presume that the Siddi might have come to secure his share of spoils which was not given to him earlier by the Angria.

Earlier, equally pertinent was a representation which had been made diplomatically to the Portuguese Viceroy João de Saldanha da Gama by Maratha chieftains Fillaji Jadhav and Ramchandra Pant that he should strive for peace between Kanhoji and the British through his good offices. But the Viceroy refrained to do so under the excuse that the relations between the two European powers were not cordial¹⁵.

It may be recalled that Kanhoji had also chastised Phond Sawant II, Desai of Kudal by setting afire Vengurla and many nearby villages. Phond Sawant had sought the help of the Portuguese but they did not desire to be in bad books with Kanhoji. Even inspite of the Dutch attack on Vijaydurg in 1724, Kanhoji did not lose courage and in 1727 he seized the rich British cargo ship Darby besides the capture of several Dutch and French ships. As a matter of fact, the British trade incurred heavy losses because East India Company in order to protect the British trade during this period had to maintain an armed squadron at the cost of £ 50,000¹⁶.

In concert with this approach, the British backed anyone who was on inimical terms with Kanhoji Angria. They also incited the Siddi but he showed disinterest most probably on account of his adjustment in the past with the Angria. The backing of Baji Rao to Kanhoji might be another reason for their non-cooperation¹⁷. The conflict between Sambhaji of Kolhapur and Shahu continued still and the former always backed the Nizam as he envied Baji Rao who was making rapid strides all around. Baji Rao had already annexed Malwa and had humbled the Nizam in 1723. He routed him again in 1728 at Palkhed and compelled him to alienate his supporter, the Raja of Kolhapur¹⁸. The Siddi having sensed the imminent danger tried the support of the Portuguese by approaching the General of Bassein, D. Antonio Casco e Mello. But the Viceroy João de Saldanha da Gama was fully aware how the Siddi had been harassing the Portuguese in the past and therefore directed the General on 13th August 1728 to capture the two barcos the Siddi was awaiting from the Holy city of Mecca, which did not carry the Portuguese cartazes (permits)¹⁹. The Viceroy was ready to make peace with the Siddi provided the latter agreed to honour the earlier treaty signed with him in 1668. He also wanted the Siddi to demolish his newly constructed fort in Madrafaba (Madrafaval) near Diu²⁰. The tough stand taken by the Portuguese mellowed the spirit of the Siddi and he had to adjust a peace with them in October 1728 to their satisfaction²¹. There were solid reasons for the Siddi to come to terms with the Portuguese. Firstly, he was not favoured by the Mughal court as before during the times of Aurangzeb, though he maintained

good relations with the Mughal Nawab of Surat for getting his annual subsidy. On the contrary, the Portuguese were so active in the Mughal Court that on 2nd June 1727, the Viceroy had received the news from Delhi assuring them great fortunes in near future as Fr. Manoel de Figueiredo had informed to Dona Juliana Dias, Emperor's intention to remove the Siddi from his office of Admiralty and hand over that charge to the Portuguese²². The happiness of the Viceroy, Dom Saldanha da Gama knew no bounds as this new favourable development was not only to bring him an immense honour but also the State's poor financial position would have brightened up if the naval charge in Surat was to be entrusted to the Portuguese. However, by this time Dona Juliana Dias was already over 80 years old and she found it difficult to do justice to her assignment in the Mughal Court²³. The second reason of the Siddi's coming closer to the Portuguese was the merciless desecration of famous temple of Lord Shiva built by celebrated Swami Brahmendra near Chiplun, home town of Baji Rao, at the hands of Siddi Saat in February 1727 and the consequent irate reaction of the Marathas which resulted into a serious threat to the Siddi. Swami Brahmendra was beholden by Shahu as his spiritual Guru and most of the Maratha Sardars including the Peshwa held him in high esteem. The Swami naturally exercised a tremendous religious influence over the Hindu population in the Maratha country. He was revered not only by the Angrias but even the Siddi of Janjira paid him high respects which is reflected in contribution of the funds, lands and gifts for the said Lord Shiva temple. The Swami used to organise a big celebration there every year

on the Shivaratri day which in 1727 fell on 8th February. Siddi Saat, in-charge of the fort of Anjanvel, in the vicinity pounced upon the temple on the same day, destroyed it, looted the wealth, disfigured the idols and committed atrocities of serious nature in the absence of the Swami there on the day. The perverse act not only enraged the Swami but also aroused the passions of the populace in the entire Maratha country. The Siddi of Janjira offered his apology immediately for the wanton action of his officer, and tried to restore the entire property. But the enraged Swami pleaded Shahu and other Sardars to initiate war against the Siddi of Janjira. But none came forward to undertake the difficult task. Baji Rao was not so inclined despite the pleas from Shahu and Swami as the expedition would not lead to any immediate gain. Besides, he had not excelled himself in naval operations which were necessary for the purpose. Kanhoji too was not favourably disposed to the war, but after his death, his son Sekhoji in 1729 was willing to start a drastic action against the Siddi²⁴.

Kanhoji spent the evening of his life peacefully and left behind six sons --- Sekhoji, Sambhaji, Tulaji, Manaji, Yesaji and Dondoji. Of these, Manaji and Yesaji were illegitimate. After father's death, while Sekhoji retained Kolaba, Sambhaji took charge of the fort of Vijaydurg and the other brothers were asked to carry out various assignments. It is important to understand the attitude adopted by the Portuguese at this juncture. The instructions of the Viceroy, João de Saldanha da Gama on 4th November 1730 to

Fr. Figueiredo at the Mughal Court reveal that the Portuguese were ready to assist the Mughals with 3000-4000 men for restoring Kalyan and Bhivandi to the Emperor. The missionary was to apprise the Emperor of the collusion of Shahu and the Arabs, with the Siddi who was issuing his own permits to the ships of traders thereby defying the Portuguese King's orders and thereby harming the royal revenue. According to another instruction, the Portuguese offered themselves to take care of Surat and to convoy the Mughal ships to and from Mecca to bring even horses without paying any duties on them because the Siddi was ruining the Mughal trade of Surat and its district. They were ready to do this service on the same yearly subsidy the Mughal Court was providing to the Siddi for the purpose. Still another instruction was aimed at drawing the Emperor's attention towards the growing power of Shahu who could not only conquer Konkan but also was in a position to threaten even his dominions and for that very reason, in the past, even the powerful Aurangzeb had to come down to the Deccan to throw out the Marathas from those places²⁵.

What emerges clearly from these instructions is that they wanted to replace the Siddis, who were the Mughal Admirals in Surat and a possible Mughal attack to check the Maratha expansion.

On the other hand, the British were cautious and they concluded a firm peace and friendship treaty with the chief of Sawantwadi in 1730 against the Angria²⁶. The Marathas were very much on the side of the new Sarkhel, Sekhoji

Angria. In order to avert any possible threat to him, they initiated their assault by raiding the Portuguese province of the North at the beginning of the year 1731. Their possessions in Kalyan and Salsete were besieged. As was expected, the Portuguese were assisted by the Mughals. However, the Mughal army did not prove effective against the Marathas. The Portuguese Viceroy João de Saldanha de Gama reported to the Crown that there existed many Hindu Generals in the Mughal army and this factor had helped Shahu to a great extent. However, the Portuguese were promptly rendered help by the closer European neighbour, the British. On this occasion, the timely British help helped the Portuguese to prevent the island of Salsete from falling into the hands of the Marathas. The Portuguese retaliated by capturing several Hindu women and children in their area and threatened to convert them if the Marathas continued the attack. They had also managed quick reinforcements. The appearance of their fleet also had its effects. Though Sekhoji attacked the Portuguese vessels, the Marathas did not press the Portuguese hard and hostilities soon ceased mainly due to the reasons explained above and partly on account of the successful mediation of Robert Covian²⁷.

However, the Marathas had already taken the recalcitrant stand to take to task anybody who came in their march towards expansion and this latest assault perhaps was to gauge the real strength of the Portuguese. They had also subdued the Raja of Kolhapur, who withdrew his claims under the Treaty of Warna on 13th April 1731 and agreed to be an

honourable vassal under Shahu. The prolonged rivalry that existed between the Peshwa and another chief of Shahu, Senapati, culminated into the settlement though favourable to the former. It also attracted many Sardars to be against him and the Peshwa could take shelter and protection solely under Shahu²⁸. However, the Maratha power showed the consistent progress and growth. The Portuguese on the other hand did not prefer to sever their existing relations either with the Angria or with the Siddi²⁹. However, when Sambhaji Angria captured three Portuguese pals laden with costly goods from Daman in 1732, they were greatly alarmed³⁰. The secret deal between the Angria and the Siddi was no more in existence now. The naval clash also occurred between the naval forces of the Angria and the Siddi in August 1731³¹.

As the Portuguese had seized two barcos of the Siddi two years ago, he deputed his envoy to Goa to get them back. The proceedings of the State Council held in Panelim, Goa on 26th April 1732 throw a flood of light on what was going on in the minds of the Portuguese. They still considered the Siddi as the best among their neighbours. They were well aware that the territories and the sand-bars of this 'unique' neighbour were strategically situated between the lands of the 'pirate' Angria and the rulers of Anteguiry and Melondim. Moreover, only the Siddi had lived upto their expectations acknowledging the international norms and always acting upon the dictates of his conscience. For them, he had always fought against the Angria and carried on trade honestly with most of the potentates maintaining peace and systematically

prolonging wars if necessitated under the prevailing circumstances. This role distinguished him from other coastal chiefs. Secondly, the Siddi being the protégé of the Mughal Emperor for generations had been on most friendly terms with them and especially in times of crises such as during the times of the protracted war against the Marathas in 1683 when he had rendered help to them in defending Chaul.

Taking these facts into account, even the insistence of possessing the Portuguese cartazes had been overlooked in case of the ships of the Siddi and this soft corner for him had continued still. So under these circumstances, the Siddi's envoy had come to Goa now to get back his captured vessels failing which the Siddi was to sever his ties with the Estado da India. Since Chaul and Caranja could be besieged by him with ease and the Estado was not in a formidable position to protect them owing to the lack of hands and losses already suffered in the war against the Marathas, the Councillors appeared in favour of supporting the Siddi. The issues of the misfortunes faced by them in the recent past in Mombassa against the Arabs and the capture by the Siddi of one of their war galleys, which had gone to the North carrying a lot of money for paying the salaries to the armed staff in October 1730, and dependence of Chaul on the Siddi were also taken into consideration prior to taking decision on the future course of action. Keeping in view all these factors, the Council therefore resolved to hand over to the Siddi two galiots anchored in the dockyard, one of them navigable and another needing repairs³². When a Councillor proposed war against the Siddi, the Viceroy in a letter of

6th February 1733 wrote to the Secretary of State in Lisbon that the war proposal was rejected because the Siddi was a powerful neighbour at Chaul, always distinguishing himself among all the coastal chiefs, and the Estado had suffered considerable losses on account of wars against the Marathas³³.

In the light of the foregoing considerations, it can be surmised that the war clouds were already there and the Portuguese felt it essential to prepare for any eventuality in future. The Marathas were looking forward for an opportunity to strike at any moment. It was at this juncture, Siddi Rasul Khan passed away in February 1733 resulting into serious discord for succession in Janjira. The Marathas thus seized the opportunity to intervene as the eldest son of Siddi Rasul Khan had been assassinated by other aspirants to power, and Abdur Rahman, the son of the slain Abdulla, fled to the Marathas for his own protection and to seek help in securing the Nawabship. Though the days were approaching monsoon, Shahu at once sent Baji Rao and Fateh Singh Bhonsle with a contingent of 5000 soldiers to attack Janjira. Another contingent was dispatched under Sripattrao Pratinidhi to raid the Siddi's southern areas. Baji Rao took the shortest course traversing through mountainous terrain of Bhor and Pali and arrived near Rajpuri in a week's time on 2nd May. His presence there was so sudden that no opportunity was left for the Siddi to provide adequate protection to Rajpuri and Khokri which were conquered with ease. He also succeeded to capture the Siddi's fleet anchored in the port because the Siddi Chief, Shekhji, was

enticed by the Peshwa with the assurance of a great prize. Shekhji therefore recommended to the Peshwa the simultaneous attacks from the land and sea to seize Janjira and had offered all help to direct the ships in the sea around Janjira. Inspite of the rough Arabian Sea in pre-monsoon days, Sekhoji was in constant touch with Baji Rao to organise the assault. He even called on him personally on 6th May at Rajpuri. Though Baji Rao was keen on springing surprise before the Siddis in fortified Janjira, Sekhoji Angria wanted him to put off the plan till the monsoon was over. He suggested that the Peshwa should station himself till then in front of Janjira with a view to disrupt all the channels of communication on land while he himself would strive to secure British and the Portuguese neutrality in the matter and utilise the rainy season to seize Thal, Rewas, Chaul and other points on the coasts with which the Siddis were in touch for their food supplies. He also wanted to capture Underi, prior to his plan to swoop upon the island fortification of Janjira with his fleet³⁴. Baji Rao with great hesitation gave his nod to the suggestions of Sekhoji. On 6th June, Sekhoji informed the Peshwa that the Siddi would not opt for a direct raid on the latter. He therefore advised him to keep his forces on alert against any surprise attack by the Siddi³⁵.

On the other hand, the contingents under Sripatrapo Pratinidhi and Fateh Singh Bhonsle, backed by Udaji Pawar and his brothers, Pillaji Jadhav and Bakaji Naik Mahadik and several others were lending help to the Peshwa in his adventure. The fleets under Angria brothers --- Sekhoji,

Sambhaji and Manaji encouraged by the two widows of Kanhoji, Laxmibai and Mathrurabai, lent their full support to this war³⁶. Baji Rao had the secret parleys with Yashwantrao Potnis, to effect the surrender of Raigarh, the capital during Shivaji's time, but subsequently had been under the control of the Siddi since 1689. He dispatched a force of 800 men to subdue the Siddi's garrison which was almost inclined for the surrender but the news of the party bringing the bribe to be paid was leaked out resulting into the swoop on it by the Siddi's men. The Peshwa sought more amount from Satara but by the time it reached, the Pratinidhi was already in Mahad and he made fresh bid with his limited detachment and did succeed in occupying Raigarh in June itself. The recovery of Raigarh was greeted as a great milestone by the Marathas who were emotionally attached to it and the Pratinidhi received encomiums from all quarters though it was not a very significant achievement in reality. But the event perturbed the Peshwa as he was deprived of his prize of labour by his rival. It led to the serious turn to the rivalry. The clandestine modus operandi followed by the Pratinidhi for impeding the Peshwa's strategies annoyed the latter to such an extent that he swore to avenge his insult by the Pratinidhi for declining to call on him at Rajpuri. Obviously, with the discord between the two, a joint action did not materialise and each one of them indulged in the activity of thwarting each other's strategy³⁷.

No wonder then, the other foes took the benefit of the abnormal happenings in the Maratha Court. The British

took unusual interest now in the Siddi and the naval help rushed even from Surat where Tegbakt Khan who ruled it almost independently established the contact with the Siddi³⁸. The Nizam too was sending succour to Siddi Saat as is evident from the news dispatched by Vasudeo Hari to Baji Rao³⁹. The Portuguese State Council at Goa too discussed the issue of Siddi and resolved on 14th April 1733 not only to return his two galiots but some more vessels as they feared at that time that he (Siddi) could impede their trade at Surat, Camboja and other Gujarati ports. It also resolved to ask Siddi to depute a responsible representative to conclude the ratification of the treaty signed with him earlier⁴⁰.

To the chagrin of the Siddi, he had earlier given up the forts in the interior owing to the imminent arrival of the Maratha troops. Baji Rao's forces had garrisoned them before Raigarh was restored. He had also appointed his army officers at Danda-Rajpuri, Nanivali and Kumbharli to frustrate the Siddi's move to procure the food supply from there. Sekhoji Angria raided the northern area and seized the Mughal centre at Chaul. A detachment under Tukoji Kadu while proceeding towards Rajpuri confronted the contingent led by the Siddi Anol. They were chased upto Rajkot, the last remaining relic of Mughal power in Kolaba, which was pounded in June. In the following month, Bakaji Naik Mahadik left Suvarndurg with a view to storm Anjanvel. While passing by the Parshuram temple at Chiplun, on the way, he found a Siddi officer getting ready to demolish the temple as he had already plundered and burnt the houses of Brahmins and indulged in cow-slaughter. The Siddi officer was however

repulsed and pushed back across the river. How the religion played the important role while dealing with the Siddis in this war is clear from the representation forwarded by different communities of the area to the Peshwa. They had expressed their readiness to collect an amount of Rs. one lakh to preclude any religious outrage in future⁴¹. In August, it is noted that one Naroshankar showed the courage to pass on the part of the revenue called Moglai to Murar-Deshmukh, a Sardar from the Maratha side for participating actively in this war against the Siddis⁴².

In a related development, Sekhoji Angria besieged the fortress of Thal from where the Siddi carried provisions to Underi. He pleaded for some cavalrymen from Baji Rao as the British, the Portuguese and Nizam's officers had provided immediate aid to the Siddi. On account of quick arrival of the cavalry force from the Peshwa under Keshav Lingoji and Anand Rao Shirke, Thal could be seized in July despite the brave defence put in by the Siddis. More impressive task was achieved by the force sent against Revas fort which was captured despite the stiff resistance offered by the Siddi's garrison there resulting into bloodshed and escapades. Angria thereafter marched towards the island fortress of Underi. But the British came to the rescue of the Siddis openly by directing the vessel Mary with soldiers, artillery and provisions and occupied it. In a diplomatic move, Sekhoji Angria withdrew his agents who had proceeded to Bombay for seeking British neutrality in the war against Siddi and decided to interrupt the European aid from Kolaba

and Gheria including the Portuguese vessels. On the other side, as part of the strategy, the Pratinidhi had left southwards to Anjanvel. He had realised that in order to seize the fort of Anjanvel, the possession of Gowalkot, in the neighbourhood of the temple of Parshuram, was vitally important. Therefore, he proceeded towards Chiplun, where Angria had already stationed 1500-strong detachment under Mahadik and Diwan Raghunath Hari. The Siddi had garrisoned there Mandangad, Bankot, Gowalkot and the strong fortification of Anjanvel. But the Angria succeeded in annexing Bankot and Mandangad by the end of May. Vijaygad was pounded by the Marathas in July, but they were overpowered by the Siddi's vanquished garrisons of Anjanvel, Vijaygad and Gowalkot. However, Mahadik with all his force chased them. The Siddi had been cornered now everywhere⁴³.

As far as Underi was concerned, the Marathas could not capture it as it was already occupied by the British. While the British were involved in aiding the Siddi not to lose the island fort, Shum-Shud-Daula, Secretary of the Mughal Emperor known before as Khan Dauran wrote to the President of the British pleading for aid on behalf of the Mughal Emperor for the Siddi in collaboration with the Portuguese so that the Siddi could retrieve his forfeited lands from the hands of Shahu and the Angria. The British showed willingness to undertake the responsibility only if the Emperor was ready to incur the expenses thereto. But when they received a plea from Siddi Saat on 7th August earnestly beseeching their succour against the Maratha Sardar,

Sripattrao, who had already seized his three forts and endangered the other two as well, they unhesitatingly decided to rush to him the succour⁴⁴.

It is relevant to underline here that Sekhoji Angria did not like Pratinidhi marching towards Anjanvel as he felt that his victory there might prevent him from possessing the strategic part of the coastline as a share of the spoils. He was also backed by the Peshwa against his rival on whose advice he even called back the detachment led by Mahadik, who was almost on the point of attacking Gowalkot. The rivalry between the Pratinidhi and the Peshwa had taken such a serious turn that the latter had allegedly sent some of his elements to the Siddi with a request to resist the former tooth and nail. The Peshwa took another diplomatic step. He urged upon the Portuguese to oppose Sekhoji Angria and even tried to obtain the British help at this time against him. It is on account of such reasons that the Portuguese Viceroy wrote to his Captain of Chaul that it was difficult for the Marathas to capture the fort of Janjira at that juncture for they had turned their attention to capture the forts of the Angria. The Portuguese did not help Baji Rao in his endeavour and the Viceroy opined that though the defeat of the Angria would be beneficial to the Portuguese, Marathas would have proved more harmful to the Portuguese than the Angria. Hence he preferred a prolonged war between Angria and Baji Rao and directed his captain to see that Angria's forts did not fall into Baji Rao's hands. The captain was asked to render help to Baji Rao just superficially so that the

Angria was not defeated. The Viceroy was not sure of Baji Rao's real designs. He suspected that Baji Rao might have planned this short-term war to embarrass the British and the Portuguese because by this way he wanted to deprive Siddi from both the British and the Portuguese, so that he could conquer Janjira with ease. Therefore, he further instructed the Captain to help the Siddi whenever he was in trouble and let know secretly to the Angria about the references made about him by Baji Rao in such a way that he did not come to know⁴⁵.

The Pratinidhi, who was in an embarrassing position, with the help of Mahadik laid siege to Gowalkot and invited its commandant, Siddi Saat, to meet him personally and advised him to join Shahu's service. The Siddi pretended that he was willing to do so but desired that the force of Angria should be recalled as he feared their presence harmful to his own interests. Mahadik showed his willingness to raise the siege. But before finalising the terms of surrender, Siddi Saat showed the signs of hesitation and said to the Pratinidhi that he would hand over the fort only after the monsoon was over. The embarrassed Pratinidhi sought immediately the detachments from Vishalgarh and launched attacks on the Siddi's outposts on 30th July. Subsequently, he reached with his troops just close to the fort from where the Siddi's garrison retaliated with full strength. The Siddi also surprised the Pratinidhi in August. After Sekhoji's death on 28th August, Sambhaji Angria could not send aid to the Pratinidhi as he was engrossed in looking after the affairs at Kolaba. The Pratinidhi however

continued to put pressure on Gowalkot even during rains. But he was defeated by the Siddis with the help of their warships. The forces commanded by Gangadhar and Mahaji Ghatge rushed to capture Anjanvel also did not fare well⁴⁶.

Against this background, the war came to an end, and the Pratinidhi returned to the capital by the end of October. The Portuguese had not joined the war openly but their sympathies were with the Siddis. The Viceroy, Conde de Sandomil in his letter dated 13th December 1733 to the Secretary of State in Lisbon disclosed that the Marathas were victorious, and that they had captured many forts and lands of the Siddi on account of the act of treachery of one of his chiefs. The two main detachments had captured his maritime bases and as the attack was launched on his fort and the lands during the monsoon, he could not be helped by them. He did send Antonio Cardim Froes with two ships to Danda ostensibly to mediate the peace between the two belligerents but his presence there was to help the Siddi openly if it was felt essential⁴⁷.

According to the Portuguese, the Marathas did attack the Siddi for months together but in the end could achieve nothing with regard to Janjira because the Siddi was backed by the British with their two fleets. The Angria's fleet had grown on account of the fresh acquisition of the Siddi's fleet by treachery. He sometimes sought peace with the Portuguese on the one hand and on the other seized their ships clarifying to the Viceroy that he did so as they did not carry his permits. As the Siddi had already lost several

places and the Marathas could neither capture Janjira nor Anjanvel and Gowalkot. Baji Rao suggested to conclude a treaty with the Siddi as the offer had been made by the British to mediate in the dispute. However, the Peshwa had gone away from Rajpuri before the conclusion of the truce that took place in December 1733. A few days later, Siddi Saat and Siddi Masud carried troops in their fleets and besieged the fort of Bankot under Angria. The garrison of Angria led by Dhondoji Angria had to abandon it during the night when it was stormed by the Siddi. Dhondoji Angria had to seek succour from the Maratha chief Vasudeo Joshi to defend Rajkot as the British had joined hands with the Siddis in the attack⁴⁸.

It ought to be noted that the Portuguese did have the ambition to join the war as it was significant for their interests, especially in the North. The British were already siding the Siddis against the Marathas. But they were more interested in harming the Angria. As soon as the monsoon receded, Siddi Saat and Siddi Masud rushed to the British authorities in Bombay to chalk out in detail the future strategy with a view to recapture the lost centres. The parleys ultimately culminated in a treaty which was signed between the seven Siddi chiefs and the government of Bombay in December 1733. Under this treaty, both the parties vowed to join hands on land and sea to fight the war with the aim to eliminate the Angrias. Fortunately, the Angria brothers buried their personal differences to unite after the death of Sekhoji. Sambhaji Angria realising the new responsibilities, beset with problems assigned important tasks to his brothers.

While Dhondoji was asked to look after the civil administration of Kolaba, Nanaji was appointed commandant of the fleet. The virtues and skills of Tulaji and Yesaji were not ignored. But Sekhoji's death was definitely a great blow to the whole Angria family in which the opinions were veering round the idea of the stoppage of war itself. Sambhaji Angria had always befriended the enemies of his eldest brother Sekhoji whose disappearance from the scene had totally changed the scenario. The Peshwa made a fresh bid against Janjira. He had also sent a word to Sambhaji to come down to Rajpuri. Sambhaji, however reacted to the emissary that: "His brother was a friend of the Peshwa, not he". In contrast, a strong British fleet sent succour to Janjira in a spectacular volte face on the part of the British who had been harassed mercilessly by the Siddis for long. Since Sambhaji showed disinterest, it was easier for the Siddi's garrisons of Anjanvel and Gowalkot to expedite the aid to Janjira. With no danger from the Angrias on the sea, more and more succour reached Janjira from Surat. Besides, the Nizam and the Portuguese also came to the aid of the Siddi. As a result, the Peshwa recommended Shahu to opt for the peace proposals sent through the Nizam if the Siddi ceded Anjanvel and Underi. But Shahu asked him to extract the Siddi's conditions from the British. Thus, finally truce was announced on 1st December 1733. Siddi Abdur Rahman, the Peshwa's choice was granted Nawabship of Janjira because the Marathas agreed not to demand more than what they had captured actually⁴⁹. However, the Siddi had forfeited all with the exception of Janjira, Anjanvel, Underi and Gowalkot,

while the Marathas gained Raigad, Thal, Revas, in addition to Siddi's territories and outposts.

What can be said with certitude is that Sambhaji Angria had his own differences with the Peshwa because the latter favoured his brother Manaji. Yet, Sambhaji was aware of the new danger arising out of the Siddi's alliance with the British in December 1733. In order to secure the Portuguese neutrality, he returned one of their galiots from Gheria alongwith the priests captured earlier⁵⁰. In reality, he was desperate and strongly desired to conclude a peace treaty with the Portuguese, and to appease them further, he released one more pal which had been seized from Daman. However, his shrewd gestures hardly had any impact on the Viceroy who asked him to return all the Portuguese pals and mend his ways in future if he was interested in peace with the Portuguese⁵¹.

It is difficult to gauge the real cause of dissension between Sambhaji and Manaji. True, the Peshwa lent his support to Manaji against his brother Sambhaji. But then there is also a Portuguese letter dated 13th December 1734 written by the Viceroy congratulating the Captain of Chaul, Caetano de Souza Pereira, for his successful attempt in creating rift between the two brothers. The Viceroy wished that the civil war between both the brothers should prolong and he surmised that Shahu would encourage Manaji, he being the weaker⁵².

In fact, his assumption did not prove unreasonable as

Manaji was fully backed by Baji Rao, Shahu and even the British. To safeguard their own interests, the Portuguese also reposed faith in Manaji. Taking a cue from these developments, the Siddis tried to reassert themselves once again and they recaptured the fortress of Bankot and marched towards Raigad with a resolve to possess it again. An inevitable consequence of these happenings, was that Shahu admonished Baji Rao and asked him to rush to the war field. The Peshwa warned the British to keep off from the war. Soon a strong contingent of 3000 troops reached Raigad in January 1734 from Satara and the Siddis who had besieged Raigad had to face the defeat in the face of the death of their leader Siddi Afwani⁵³. The Marathas then occupied Mahad in February as Siddi Saat had abandoned it to save Anjanvel. In the following month, the Maratha force soon recaptured Bankot. With the recovery of all the lost possessions, they descended upon Gowalkot and Anjanvel forts which had been heavily protected by the Siddi Saat who had also obtained aid from the British and the Portuguese at this critical time⁵⁴.

Shahu did not take any chances. He sent five cannons and issued orders to every Maratha fort to supply one piece of cannon to the besieging force. He also showed keen interest in casting of new guns. However, Siddi Saat resisted gallantly in defending the fort, and even made surprise sorties on the besieging Marathas during April and May under the cover of fire of his guns⁵⁵. The naval force on the side of Marathas that had surrounded Anjanvel could not seize it for several reasons. One reason among them was that the Portuguese and British vessels always obstructed it.

Once the fleet of Angria giving a slip to the Siddi's patrolling ships .. penetrated deep upto Anjanvel and opened fire. But on account of the violent storm, this fleet had to seek shelter of Gheria⁵⁶. Even then, victory was elusive for the Marathas because the Siddi was openly backed by the British and the Portuguese who always waited for opportunities to exploit the situation to their own advantages. Soon followed the civil war in the house of Angrias. In the struggle, Manaji had to escape and seek shelter in the Portuguese fort at Chaul in December 1734 because Sambhaji planned to eliminate him. It was a good opportunity for the Portuguese to play their own game in the matter. While Baji Rao instigated Manaji and promoted his interests, the British and the Portuguese helped him financially and provided all the war material so that Manaji could inflict maximum damage on his brother. He got 7 guns, 200 shots, 30 barrels of powder, 20 slabs of lead, 3000 small shots for porridge and 20 pieces of Dangaree, besides Rs.4000 from the British alone⁵⁸. Consequently, Manaji could soon storm successfully the fort of Kolaba. Being enraged with his brother Yesaji who had been appointed by Sambhaji to look after the fort, he gouged his eyes. Siddi Saat who was with Manaji made fervent appeals to rush reinforcements at Kolaba. The British sensing that he might surrender the fort provided him an advance of Rs.30,000⁵⁹. The Portuguese on the other hand had approached the Nizam who was planning action against the Marathas. Baji Rao is also said to have written to the Portuguese Viceroy that he was negotiating on peace with the Siddi against Sambhaji Angria and wanted to enlist the

support of the English and the Portuguese to defeat him. The Portuguese though liked the destruction of Sambhaji, they never desired the Marathas to become the masters of his forts and hence the Viceroy was for the continuance of war between the Angria brothers. Simultaneously, the Portuguese continued to help the Siddi against the Marathas, lest Baji Rao would create problems for them⁶⁰. Therefore, it can be safely stated that the Portuguese policy was to weaken all their enemies. However, Baji Rao was in a position to humiliate Sambhaji who had to conclude a treaty with him in February 1735 that drove him out to his southern possessions.

Sambhaji retained the title of Sarkhel and Manaji was conferred the title of Vajrath Maab⁶¹. As a result, Sambhaji Angria did not participate in the campaign to acquire Gowalkot. Shahu persuaded Sambhaji to help and support the land forces, who subsequently obliged by deputing the Kiledar of Jaygarh there. But the naval operation was extremely difficult. The fort was required to be subjected to a three-pronged attack if it was to be captured. In the meanwhile, monsoon was approaching fast and the troops had to raise the siege to lay it again after the monsoon. Till then they encamped near Chiplun⁶².

The successes of the Marathas were communicated to the Nizam by Shahu himself. He wrote to him that the Siddis of Rajpuri had been indulging in tyrannical actions for a long time and had rebelled even against the Mughals. Since they were in no mood to surrender Raigad and other places falling under his own dominion according to the order of the

Mughal Emperor, he resolved to exterminate them and fortunately some officers under the Siddi, who had alienated them on account of their tyranny came over to the side of Marathas seeking shelter thereby handing over forts to Baji Rao and Sripat Rao Pratinidhi. Some among them, however ran away to seek the help of their old master, the son of Siddi Sarur. Therefore the said Maratha officers were planning punitive action against them. He further reported that the Siddi sought peace which was granted and Baji Rao had been asked to negotiate for the peace. But the Siddis did not keep up the promise and occupied the fort of Rairi (Raigad). In retaliation, Udaji Pawar bravely defeated the armies of the son of Siddi Ambar, captured Thana Panchor and raided Mahad where Siddi Saat was staying. He did go from Mahad to Janjira but was chased everywhere. He revealed that Jivaji Khande Rao, Prabhu Chittanvis and Udaji Pawar conquered Bankot, Thana and Mahad and besieged the fort of Golkot. However, a messenger of the English offered to mediate for peace which was accepted⁶³.

In the meanwhile, the rainy season (1735) was utilised by the Siddi to prepare himself for the imminent war. On 2nd May 1735, Nawab Siddi Abdul Rahman wrote a friendly letter to the Portuguese Viceroy Conde de Sandomil inviting his attention to the unique and age-old friendship between the two States⁶⁴. The Viceroy responded soon and in June, Vasudeo Joshi informed the Peshwa the news received by him about the offer made by Inchbird and Siddi Saat to the Portuguese at Bassein to hand over the fort of Caranja to the

Siddi so as to facilitate the water supply for Underi⁶⁵. Another report from Subhaji Mankar discloses that the Siddi had also established rapport with the Dutch who used to bring merchandise from Surat for their disposal at Janjira⁶⁶. As Shahu was personally involved in this warfare, he warned the Raja of Kolhapur, his cousin in October for helping the Siddi secretly⁶⁷. It is observed that in the same month, the Portuguese Viceroy permitted the Siddi to transport the rice from their area badly needed by him. But the Portuguese were very cautious in their actions. They had so far not supported any party openly and they did not help anybody unless they could derive some benefit for themselves. While providing facilities to the Siddi, they had in mind the fort of Madrafaval (Jafarabad in the south-eastern coast of Kathiawar peninsula) which the Siddi had built up and they wanted now to raze it but they were going ahead with utmost caution to attain that end because they were scared of the Siddi's potentiality which could damage their trade interest⁶⁸. The Siddi had deputed his envoy to Goa for seeking the help of the Portuguese navy in the war against Shahu. The Viceroy also learnt from his Captain in the North and the British in Bombay that they were already in the process of sending aid to Gowalkot⁶⁹. As per the information received through the Siddi's envoy, the Marathas were aiming to launch an attack on the island of Salsete⁷⁰.

In an interesting development, as the Nawab of Surat, Tegbakt Khan, had not paid the Siddi his annual subsidy, he captured his several vessels at the mouth of Tapti in August

1735. The Nawab almost acted as an independent ruler there but was compelled by the Siddi to pay him his arrears as well as the current year's subsidy totalling Rs.3,90,000. The Mughal Emperor had no hold over the Nawab since 1733 as he sided the British. The Emperor inclined to allow the British the status and the revenues of Admiral of Surat, but the latter were not to accept the given position forcibly as they were more interested to lay attention on Bombay and its surroundings from where they had to provide the Siddi with money, ships and war materials at that juncture. Since the Marathas were a menace to Surat and the Nawab had to shell out the full compensation to the British in case they were to accept the Admiralty, he was compelled by these circumstances to concede to the Siddi due status in Surat⁷¹.

Curiously enough, the fleet of Sambhaji Angria under Mhaske stationed at Kalusta had cruised one of the channels running deep inside the besieged fort of Gowalkot. We learn from the Portuguese Viceroy's letter dated 3rd October 1735 to the captain of Chaul that he caught the Siddis unawares and destroyed their batteries and camp. But Sambhaji owing to his serious disenchantment with Baji Rao did not offer any co-operation, though Siddi Saat's plight was pitiable. However, the main cause of his disinterestedness was the incoming powerful British fleet which had come there to negotiate for peace. Coincidentally, the Portuguese fleet too was seen moving near Anjanvel posing threat to Suvarnadurg, Vijaydurg and Jaygarh⁷². Therefore, in a conciliatory move, Sambhaji deputed from Vijaydurg, one of his vessels to Goa on

2nd October with a messenger to meet the Viceroy Conde de Sandomil and seek his help (i) to allow his ships in the river Chaul and (ii) to provide his vessels the facilities of water etc. in all the Portuguese ports. The Viceroy asked him to return first his three pals captured from Daman if further talks were to be continued on his proposal⁷³.

With the moving out of Mhaske's fleet from the Gowalkot channel, Siddi Saat who had been keeping a low profile suddenly started his attacking spree. He sailed from Anjanvel in his fleet and touched down the seaside villages of Angria setting them afire and looting them⁷⁴. In fact, the Peshwa and Shahu's Court had alienated Sambhaji Angria to such an extent that he even entertained for parleys with Siddi Saat who gladly received his move for aid against his brother Manaji in retrieving Kolaba⁷⁵. Siddi Saat's rise was extraordinary. He seized Bankot again in December slaying the entire garrison in the fort. But while the fresh Maratha detachment from Satara was sighted before Bankot, the fort was abandoned during the night, but the Siddi had taken utmost care to lift away the store material and provisions in his vessels⁷⁶. The Portuguese Viceroy Conde de Sandomil wrote to the Crown in January 1736 that the Siddi was defending his naval forts well while he himself was safeguarding the State's interests by searching the avenues of mediating the peace with all the warring factions⁷⁷. On 8th February, he further expressed his happiness over Siddi Saat's victory at Bankot but was surprised to note its quick recovery by the Marathas. Since the fort had suffered a considerable damage, he felt quite satisfied on learning

about of one more fort of the Angria was almost demolished. The Viceroy hoped that since Baji Rao had gone to a far away place, the war would end soon⁷⁸. Though Siddi Saat had lost Bankot and many of his soldiers, the Marathas too had lost the lives of 40 of their brave warriors including Bakoji Mahadik⁷⁹. By April 1736 Baji Rao's most trusted General, Pillaji Jadhav was entrusted with the task of fresh attack but his strategy to storm Gowalkot from the village of Kalusta did not materialise in time though he himself had made deep inroads in Dhamni channel. As a result, Siddi Saat could not carry provisions from Dhamni. Yet, he manipulated to take the same hastily through Kalusta waters⁸⁰.

To retrieve the situation, the bold and enterprising Siddi Saat then all of a sudden swooped Revas and occupied the fort bravely. There he put the entire garrison to death showing no mercy. He then proceeded towards Kolaba and the helpless Manaji frantically appealed for aid from his benefactor Chimnaji Appa. As for Sambhaji, he had already returned all the cloth pertaining to the merchants of Daman but conveyed his helplessness to send back the seized ships on account of the shortage of sailors who were ultimately supplied by the Viceroy from Goa on 8th May 1736. But inspite of this, the ships were not restored by him to the Portuguese⁸¹.

Manaji in the meanwhile demolished a neighbouring mosque near Rajkot and had positioned himself to face the advancing Siddi Saat. The demolition of the mosque was a matter of little importance for the Portuguese. What they

wondered at was the infringement of the existing peace treaty by Manaji. The absence of Baji Rao did cause some anxiety to the Viceroy, Conde de Sandomil, but he greatly relied on Siddi Saat and was eager to hear about the fall of Kolaba in the hands of the latter. The Viceroy was also hopeful of the Mughal attack against Shahu⁸². However, Chimnaji Appa sprang a surprise. He left Satara with his force with such a speed that he arrived near Charhai Kamorle on 18th April. Siddi Saat was unaware of his arrival till last. When Chimnaji's forces suddenly positioned themselves before Siddi Saat, he thought them to be Manaji's detachment. Being entrapped thus unexpectedly, he realised that he had to confront openly now the Maratha cavalry three times its number. To his astonishment, the rush of Maratha cavalry with gusto straight into his formation, proved utterly disastrous for him. Practically, entire Siddi detachment was killed leaving a few who jumped in the boats and escaped. The daring and fearless Siddi Saat with his valiant captains, Siddi Yakub who defended Underi and Subhanji Ghatge were assassinated and his camp was pillaged. With the death of Siddi Saat, Marathas had achieved a significant victory because for the last one decade they had been constantly harassed by the Siddis and hence all the opposition had now abruptly come to an end. There was a great jubilation in the Maratha capital over the victory as it was considered national one over the destroyer of the Swami's temple⁸³.

The sad news of Siddi Saat's demise and total destruction of his force was conveyed to the Viceroy, Conde de

Sandomil by the General of the North in a letter dated 2nd May 1736. The Viceroy felt very much annoyed on learning about the happenings in the North. The General had also expressed his view that the loss of Siddi Saat would further boost the morale of the Marathas to capture Danda which could not be resisted with ease. The Viceroy was also disturbed to learn that Manaji had given to Chmnaji the Caza Forte at Chaul de Sima as a token of reward for his succour⁸⁴.

It is critically important to understand that the death of Siddi Saat rendered both the Portuguese and the English silent and the significant change was also discernible in the attitude of Sambhaji Angria. However, the onset of the monsoon and the failing health of Maratha Sardar, Pillaji Jadhav, delayed the conclusion of a treaty of Marathas with the Siddis, which was signed ultimately on 25th September 1736. The Mahals of Janjira namely Nandgaon, Murud, Shriwardhan, Diwa, Mhasle, Mandle and the part of Gowal were to be directly looked after by the Siddi's officials, while Maratha administration was made effective in the interior Mahals of Tala, Ghosala, Nizampur, Birwadi, Goregaon and the part of Gowal. It was stipulated that both could enjoy the revenues of the eleven Mahals jointly. The port of Rajpuri was to be under the exclusive control of the Siddi, while Roha was to remain solely under the control of the Marathas⁸⁵.

With this treaty, all the opposition of the Siddis vanished forever. However, the feelings of bitterness still prevailed, and just before the signing of the treaty, some

Siddis had sought the authorisation of the Viceroy, Conde de Sandomil to enter the Chaul river with ships with force to fight against Manaji and the Marathas. The Viceroy in turn directed his General in the North to ascertain whether the Siddis were really keen to take revenge against Manaji and the Marathas⁸⁶. The General informed the Viceroy that with the death of Siddi Saat, who possessed good qualities and valour, it would be proper for the Siddis to give up the talk of the revenge. Instead, they should select one among themselves who could equal Siddi Saat in valour. If the Siddis were allowed to pass through the river against Manaji, the Marathas might initiate an armed action against the Portuguese. Hence he felt that it would be advisable to render help to Sambhaji Angria to capture Casa Forte, he being its legitimate owner⁸⁷.

In a desperate design, Shahu invited Sambhaji of Kolhapur for a personal meeting in May 1736.. The reason behind this meeting appears to be to obtain his co-operation against the Siddi⁸⁸. This can be deduced from the fact that the discussion on the future course of war was going on in the Maratha camp and as early as on 1st September 1736, the British Governor intimated the Portuguese Viceroy, Conde de Sandomil of Baji Rao's real intention behind invading Thana and the passes near it in order to facilitate Marathas' entry into Salsette⁸⁹.

Putting these trends together, Sambhaji Angria bore the grudge against the British because he had been insulted by them. On 26th December 1735, his four galiots and five

ghurabs intercepted the British 'Derby' near Suvarnadurg, and forcibly took it away alongwith the 155 crew members. Interestingly, in the same month, Shahu had brought about a rapprochement between the chiefs of Gheria and Sawantwadi. On completion of the six months' custody in the jail for the British crew, Captain inchbird proceeded to Gheria to bargain for their release assuring peace for the next six months. But, soon, the British violated their commitment and began assaulting Angria's vessels. They even seized one of his ghurabs near Mangalore⁹⁰.

The following year proved not to be so favourable for Sambhaji Angria. However, he being free from any anxiety about Siddi's attacks, the latter having been enfeebled by the Marathas, he regained confidence and stood on his own legs in 1737. The Portuguese were conscious that the war with the Marathas was imminent since they had already crippled the Siddi. When the Peshwa was trying to bring rapprochement between the Angria brothers, the Portuguese had consented to permit the Marathas to set up a factory on the Salsete island in a locality which was to be decided by the Portuguese General of the North, who happened to be a headstrong. When Vyankat Rao Joshi, Baji Rao's brother-in-law and Maratha envoy approached and requested him to choose the site in accordance with the earlier agreement, he was so furious that he called Baji Rao a negro, in violation of the diplomatic niceties. Baji Rao could not bear this insult and made up his mind to avenge it and called for preparations in right earnest with utmost secrecy and speed. When the

Maratha forces began to have their formation on the frontiers, the Portuguese commander of the North was found to be totally unaware of their movements. When he was sounded by the British, he responded stating that when the barbarians would come, he knew how to receive them. And when the Maratha force swooped upon the Portuguese in early 1737, they were taken by surprise. They forced their entry into the half built fort of Thana in April 1737 and succeeded in capturing it. Many Portuguese troops present there retaliated vehemently laying down their lives. Thereafter, the Maratha forces took over Salsete, Parsik, Belapur, Dharavi, Arnala and other places⁹¹.

As a matter of fact, the Siddi knew Baji Rao's secret machinations, but he had the impression that he was deceived by the Portuguese. At that time, Lakshman Hari was the Maratha Agent who resided at Janjira. The report he dispatched to the Peshwa discloses that the Siddi of Janjira was in ecstasy on hearing of Baji Rao's war activities against the Portuguese⁹². It reveals that the Siddi had then adopted friendly attitude towards the Marathas. The change was not unexpected as the Siddi was Shahu's nominee and the fight of the Marathas had been mainly against the hot-tempered Siddi Saat. That the Siddi of Janjira was friendly towards the Marathas is further corroborated by a letter written by Shahu to the Nizam stating that when Siddi Saat was being hotly pursued by Udaji Pawar, he (Saat) left Mahad for Rajpuri, but the Siddi of that place did not allow him entry into the fort⁹³.

It is no matter of surprise that the Marathas did not raid Bassein immediately. As they wanted to ascertain first its internal preparedness, the attack was delayed. The monsoon was utilised by both the parties in preparation for the war. On the other hand, in fray, the Portuguese resolved to join the British and the Siddi to expel the Marathas from their territories. With the help of the British and the Siddi they also tried to have a joint fleet to defend Bassein. In addition, the Portuguese decided to raise an army of 5000 men from Mangalore, Diu, Surat etc. The Viceroy also approached the neighbouring Sunda Kingdom and southern ports to enlist Christian Nairs to send succour to Salsete⁹⁴.

To illustrate the widespread support, the Marathas had the backing of both the Angria brothers and this was considered as a great alleviation. The report sent by Narayan Bhaskar to Chimmaji from Sawantwadi conveying the readiness of the Sawants to join hands with the Peshwa in his campaign against the Portuguese gave a further boost to them resulting into the hardening of the attitude towards the Portuguese⁹⁵.

The Portuguese on the other hand took all the precautions and measures and rushed the supplies to Bassein from all its possessions. The Portuguese managed to get 2000 men from Diu, 260 from Bassein and 500 from Surat and others were to be sent by the Siddi to liberate Salsete. And the Marathas utilised the monsoon season to effect the entry into the Portuguese fort incognito to check their weak points⁹⁶. In December 1737, the Portuguese sent additional force at the

cost of the defence of Goa. They were so desperate that they deputed one Antonio Miz Ribeiro with 20000 Xerafins to procure the men in Siddi's service⁹⁷. However, the Siddi not only did anything but retained the amount with him. At this juncture, the Marathas learnt from Thana that the British, the Portuguese and the Siddis had joined hands to fight against the Marathas and were reported to be planning a campaign against Thana⁹⁸. Khandoji Mankar stationed at Thana again sent a message about the strong fleet of Luis Botelho sighted at Revdanda and his reported aim was to recapture Thana from the Marathas. Therefore, Mankar urged for immediate succour to rescue it⁹⁹.

But the Portuguese had realised that they could not stand against the Marathas for long. Therefore, they tried their level best to seek peace with the Marathas. Their choice for the purpose fell upon Raja Sawai Jai Singh of Jaipur who had desired the services of two Portuguese Mathematicians for his astronomical research. The Viceroy, Conde de Sandomil wrote to the General of the North on 6th December 1737 that the time was most appropriate and convenient to approach the Raja for negotiating the peace with Baji Rao¹⁰⁰. On the very next day, the Viceroy wrote to the Raja, who was most powerful and friendly to the Mughal Emperor, mentioning the war that was going on with the Marathas and sought his intervention in it. He impressed upon him that Baji Rao was the principal author of this war which made it impossible for the Portuguese Mathematicians to travel as all the ways remained disrupted¹⁰¹.

In the meanwhile, the Marathas had occupied Ghodbandar putting to sword its garrison thereby establishing their authority in the Bassein river. Thus they wanted to prevent the succour reaching the Portuguese. But it had already arrived much before they occupied Ghodbandar. It was extremely difficult for them to oust the Portuguese from there. But they continued to besiege Bassein. However, there being too much pressure on in North India, Peshwa was compelled to withdraw a large number of his forces from Bassein. This encouraged the Portuguese to make a bid to recover Thana in 1738. But though they inflicted the defeat on the Marathas at Asherim, they finally failed to recapture Thana¹⁰².

Confronted with such challenges, the Portuguese were short of time. The captain of Chaul reported on 9th January 1738 that he had acute shortage of provisions and the garrison was already subjected to sufferings because the Marathas had impeded the supply. Since he could not procure anything, he stopped all the trade of Marathas in salt, coconut and other necessary commodities. Consequently, the Marathas had to provide him some rice to continue their commercial activities. However, his soldiers were without payment for months together¹⁰³. The Portuguese General in the North had done his best and his untiring efforts, valour and care in fortifying Thana for defending the island of Salsete were lauded by the people of Bassein in a letter written to the Portuguese King on 14th December, 1738. They mentioned to the Crown that the total calamity was allowed to occur by the Almighty not as a punishment to the brave and

virtuous General but in retaliation of great misdeeds of all.

They added further that the Divine justice had eclipsed by the sign in the sky in the form of a comet seen by all with a prediction of unfailing devastation and fatality which had not made any impression in their hearts till then and they would remain blind to the situation till they experience the effects of such a disastrous and heavy war¹⁰⁴.

When the Marathas launched a general attack on all fronts against the Portuguese, Commandant of Chaul wrote to the Viceroy on 10th January 1739 that he had received the news from the Captain of Bassein that the Marathas had invaded the areas of Daman, scaled the walls of fort 'Cataravara' and also carried away eight pieces of artillery and 3000 bags of rice (Muras de bate), but he himself was doing his best not to let them know about the lack of provisions in the fort of Chaul¹⁰⁵.

It is curious to note that the Marathas had bought ammunition from the British. When the Portuguese lodged their protest, the British Governor pleaded neutrality. Chimnaji Appa who had been upgraded to the position of the Commander-in-chief in November 1738 had chalked a strategy of spearheading a simultaneous assault on all the Portuguese possessions. He, therefore blocked the supplies heading towards Bassein and spread out his troops over the whole region from Daman to Diu under his personal supervision. The British who had so far preferred neutrality, desiring the weakening of both the warring parties changed the stance and began to provide the Portuguese with supplies via sea route. This obviously resulted into the prolongation of the war.

After occupying the neighbouring areas, Bassein itself was the target of an oppressive siege. At the same time, Vyankat Rao Ghorapade occupied Madgaon and marched towards Goa. Viceroy Conde de Sandomil found it extremely difficult to build up a strong defence in Goa and it was apparent right from the start that the Portuguese with all their full preparation would find it virtually impossible to repulse the forceful Maratha attack. In the area around Bombay, Versova, Karanja and Bandra fell in the hands of the Marathas and thereafter the furious fighting veered round the fort of Bassein. Though the Portuguese garrison put up a brave fight against the vigorous attacks of the Marathas, the latter threatened that they would ransack the town and would eliminate the Christian population there. The Portuguese decided to end the war on certain conditions. The Marathas generously allowed the Portuguese garrison to leave the place within eight days with honour. It was an extraordinary victory for the Marathas, the like of which was never witnessed before¹⁰⁶.

It must be acknowledged that the Angria brothers had contributed a lot in this campaign despite their differences and acting in their own way. Had they joined together and blockaded the sea, the Portuguese would have surrendered earlier. They also fought against the British and at the same time assisted the land forces. The Portuguese were so scared in this war that the Viceroy, Conde de Sandomil had written to Sambhaji Angria in September 1737 not to apprehend the merchant ships carrying the goods of his tradesmen. He also informed him that a Portuguese Patemar passing through

Anjanvel with provisions would be going to Bassein and from there was destined to reach Goa and hence he wanted that the ship be allowed to pass without any obstruction and the permits may be issued by the Angria to all the traders who wished to carry on their goods from Canara's points coming under his jurisdiction¹⁰⁷. The letter proves the fact that the Viceroy Conde de Sandomil in his anxiety to face the Maratha assaults had sought Angria's permits for his traders, whereas he actually desired to send provisions and succour to his northern territories. Sambhaji in December swooped upon the trading ship carrying 1120 bags of rice from Canara to Goa but set it free later on¹⁰⁸. In the beginning of 1738, a Portuguese pal belonging to Diu surrendered to Sambhaji's men off Dahanu without much resistance¹⁰⁹. Next, he intercepted the Portuguese frigate São Miguel near Gheria. The Portuguese captain thought that he would not be harassed by the Angria but when five pals and eleven galiots appeared for its capture, he realised his mistake. He tried to defend and fought for six hours before finally surrendering to Angria's men¹¹⁰. The ship was carrying a rich cargo of ivory and other goods worth 100,000 xerafins. In addition, he seized three parangues and one of them had Rs.40,000 in cash¹¹¹. The Portuguese were upset because for want of the provisions, they would lose Bassein to the Marathas. Thus the attacks of the Angrias had played a very significant role in the Bassein campaign of the Marathas. But the capture of two Dutch vessels by Sambhaji near Barcelore invited trouble from them. The Dutch on 27th February 1739 brought their fleet of eight warships and some light vessels to punish the Angria. The

fleet was welcomed by the Viceroy, Conde de Sandomil at the bar of Aguada in Goa. He at once proposed an alliance not only against the Angria but also against the Marathas. His proposal was that all the European nations should have a joint action against their Asian enemies. And the Dutch fleet did try to attack Gheria, but did not succeed¹¹².

However, Sambhaji Angria desired that the British should have a conditional treaty with him and that is the reason why his fleet continued to harass them near Bombay. In May 1739, the British were so embarrassed that they released his prisoners as the expense of feeding them far exceeded the outcome of their labour. They also expected that Sambhaji in turn would show the consideration of releasing the British prisoners. He did agree to do so without any hesitation, but put forward the proposal that the British should not ply their ships without his permits or in the alternative pay him two crores of rupees yearly in lieu of it. The parleys for peace went on for a long time and the British deputed their Marine Superintendent of Bombay to Gheria with the twin object of negotiating peace and to blockade Gheria if opportunity arose. He however found it difficult to remain off Gheria and therefore proceeded further in search of Angria's fleet and to confront it. But a storm overtook him and he was drowned alongwith three of his vessels. In the meantime, Sambhaji's men succeeded in capturing the British vessel Anne near Diu¹¹³.

In the same year, the Portuguese ship carrying 200

men and the sum of 150,000 xerafins to Nazareth in the North narrowly escaped from falling into the hands of Sambhaji and luckily slipped out unhurt as his attention was diverted by the Dutch vessels¹¹⁴. Towards the South, the well equipped 32-gun Portuguese frigate Nossa Senhora da Vitoria which was under the command of Antonio de Brito Freire had convoyed 47 parangues of salt to the southern ports. While returning, it was carrying 30,000 bags of rice. Sambhaji Angria's ships lay in wait for it as the Marathas were also keen to stop this supply. And when the frigate reached Honavar in the early hours of 5th March 1739, Angria's ships attacked it. The frigate, despite its captain taking all the precautionary measures to position his guns in the proper directions was assaulted from all sides. In the battle that raged for the whole day, Angria's two pals were damaged. But in the end, the frigate proceeded safely to Goa¹¹⁵.

Comparatively, Manaji Angria rendered better cooperation to Chimnaji. He dared to proceed towards the island of Karanja with 40 galiots and 2000 men in early 1739 and easily landed there. The Portuguese garrison there surrendered on 21st March after a siege of only five days¹¹⁶. The garrison of Bassein also capitulated to the Marathas on the same day and they occupied the fort. However, hostilities persisted as Chaul was still under the Portuguese. The remaining forces of the Portuguese began withdrawing to Goa from Bassein after the rains. On the way, they were attacked by Khem Sawant Bhonsle of Sawantwadi and many of them had a miserable death¹¹⁷.

To make the matters worse for the Portuguese, the Siddi did not supply at all any men despite receiving an advance of 20,000 xerafins for their service and they were perforced to send one Caetano de Souza in December 1739 to recover that amount from the Siddi¹¹⁸. The Portuguese felt so disgusted that they allowed to submerge the village of Mandai in Goa by demolishing the 'bund' of the Khazan lands (cultivable land lying along the coast)¹¹⁹. Goa itself was in danger now as it had been under a constant attack. In 1740, the two Angria brothers caused more loss to the Portuguese than what they had ever suffered before. Sambhaji's fleet first met the Portuguese frigate Oliveira near Gheria but after a few hours fighting left it and departed southwards along the coast. It entered Onor to procure some masts and its men learnt about the certain Portuguese boats, with foodgrains aboard sailing under a strong escort from the south. Only a few stray Portuguese vessels, which had been warned of the movements of the Angria fleet, made good their escape. The main flotilla however proceeded freely. It consisted of two pals, two galiots and a charrua. Caught unawares, it did not take much time for the Portuguese Admiral to surrender. Its capture by Sambhaji was so swift and smooth that almost the whole cargo of foodgrains fell into his hands. The Angria passed with his valuable acquisition within the sight of Anjediv and a little distance off Aguada, but the Portuguese had been so demoralised that they did not venture to start any rescue operation. Sambhaji however did not ill-treat the captives and freed them. The Portuguese chroniclers maintain that he

set free the Admiral and the other captives in order to save the boarding expenses on them but the fact remains that he strongly desired the Portuguese to respect his naval authority and buy his own permits as the Portuguese had been doing the same ever since they landed in India. Manaji Angria, on the other hand, captured a war pataxo of the Portuguese at Diu. Sambhaji Angria now suddenly appeared at Alibag in April and seized Hirakot and Sagargarh and then attacked Kolaba, the loss of which he could not bear. Manaji in desperation appealed to the Peshwa as well as the British for succour. Baji Rao was no more, having died at an early age, but his successor Peshwa Balaji Baji Rao could not risk the fall of Manaji. The British who had in the beginning turned down the request of Manaji for help later sided the Marathas and sent their squadron against Sambhaji Angria who had no other option than to retreat¹²⁰. Manaji also received assistance from the Portuguese in this operation. The Portuguese feared that Sambhaji might devastate Chaul after occupying Kolaba and therefore they rushed help to Manaji in order to ensure that Kolaba did not fall in the hands of Sambhaji¹²¹. However, Sambhaji succeeded in seizing Bharatgad, Bhagvantgad as well as a considerable part of the possessions of Sawantwadi ruler in the Salshi province. But the Maratha navy under Khandoji Mankar in January 1741 tightened the grip around Chaul which was assaulted fiercely under the command of Chimnaji. Salcete, Bardez and Goa were already under siege then and it was withdrawn by the Marathas only after the Portuguese passed over Chaul to them in the beginning of 1741¹²².

Interestingly, prior to surrendering Chaul, the Portuguese were in a dilemma as how to believe the Marathas that they would withdraw from Goa soon after taking over Chaul. Therefore, they decided to hand over the fort of Chaul to the Marathas through the British who however showed their unwillingness to take it over. The Portuguese garrison at Chaul wanted to deliver the fort to the Siddi on payment and unlike the British he was ready to accept it. But Manaji was not willing to see that all the forts pass into the hands of the Marathas. So he too expressed his readiness to take the said fort by paying the amount to its garrison¹²³. The Portuguese authorities in Goa never liked the idea of handing over the fort to one of their enemies, the Siddi. Hence ultimately it was entrusted to the British in November 1740, who handed it over to the Marathas later on. The treaty of the surrender of Chaul was drawn at Poona between Balaji Baji Rao and the Portuguese Commissary Dom Francisco Baron de Gallenfels¹²⁴. However, Dom Francisco's letter dated 31st October 1740 gives an interesting account of a conspiracy behind passing the fort of Chaul to the Siddi of Janjira. After investigating the matter in detail, he found through the British Captain Inchbird that the Portuguese soldiers at Korlai had opened a treacherous correspondence with the Siddi leading to the cession of Chaul fort in his favour. The plot was investigated into and was found to be true. In fact, the entire garrison comprising 120 men at the fort of Chaul was involved in the plot. It was with the help of the Maratha troops that Dom Francisco kept the Siddi away, who had

encamped in the nearby village of Borde with 900 men for the purpose. The investigations also revealed Manaji's interest in the fort¹²⁵.

Thus, the Marathas achieved a very significant success against the Siddi of Janjira and the Portuguese.

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CHAPTER VI

SIDDI-MARATHA TIES VIS-A-VIS PORTUGUESE AND THE BRITISH (1740-1813)

In the meantime, an event of far reaching consequences had occurred in the history of India. Nadirshah of Afghanistan had caused to lose face of the pleasure seeking Emperor of Delhi in 1739 by ravaging the wealthy capital and putting to sword its peace loving population mercilessly. He, however, went off with a huge spoil of slaves, 10,000 horses and equal number of camels including the world famous Kohinur diamond and the expensive Peacock Throne of Shahjahan, besides Rs.15 crores in cash and numerous jewels and other precious pieces from the imperial treasure house¹.

Peshwa Baji Rao had expired at Raver on the banks of Narmada on 25th April 1740 at the age of 42 and his attractive mistress Mastani went Sati. Obviously, the responsibility of looking after the administration for some time fell on Chimnaji Appa, Baji Rao's brother, till the charge of Peshwa was taken over by the deceased Peshwa's son Balaji Baji Rao, also known as Nana Saheb². The Siddi though lost much of his power, resided still in his favourite castle of Janjira, and the Portuguese were now restricted to Goa, Daman & Diu on the western coast. But they remained hostile towards the Marathas as Baji Rao had claimed some dues even from Salcete (Goa) and had deputed Shrihari Pant to Goa with his army to recover the dues early in 1740³. The British had established themselves in Bombay from where they had played

their role in the war fought against the Siddis and the Portuguese by the Marathas. As pointed out earlier, Manaji Angria was unhappy with the Marathas as they had annexed a number of coastal outposts and the new Peshwa did not treat him so well in contrast to what his father had done to him. Some of his forts were also taken over by Sadashiva Rao. Therefore, he lodged a complaint with Shahu about the uncourteous treatment meted out to him. Sambhaji Angria already had problems with the Marathas, and as both the Angria brothers had acted before and during the Maratha war against the Portuguese, they again approached other powers to have alliance with them. Though these alliances as well as hostilities in those days were quite uncertain and they endured as long as they served the interests and purposes of the parties involved in them, none in the Angria family had any reason to be closer to the new Peshwa⁴. Therefore, it was not surprising that Sambhaji tried to have cordial relations with the Portuguese. In the meanwhile, the Portuguese had already signed a treaty with the Bhonsles of Sawantwadi in September 1741⁵. At the same time, Sambhaji established contact with the Siddi and ironed out his differences with him. He also wanted to have peace with the British and Kolaba going in the hands of Manaji still perturbed him. As fate would have it, in September 1741 the sudden blaze in his fleet further shattered his hopes to reconquer Kolaba fort. Meanwhile, in the same month, the new Viceroy Dom Luis de Meneses had also taken charge in Goa and he had brought with him from Portugal the latest guns of superior quality. In next November, Sambhaji wrote to the

new Viceroy expressing his willingness to help the Portuguese secretly to recapture Bassein from the Peshwa. The Viceroy was glad and on 2nd December he responded by sending an invitation to him to depute a person with authority with whom he could discuss the plan⁶. However, before anything could materialise, Sambhaji Angria expired on 12th January 1742⁷.

Tulaji succeeded Sambhaji but the feelings of discord between him and Manaji were as strong as they were during Sambhaji's time. Manaji being the elder to him, claimed Sarkhelship. Tulaji also laid his claim for the coveted honour by succeeding Sambhaji. However, Shahu seems to have reserved the honour to the one who would prove his worth by displaying a sort of distinguished act of valour. Therefore, Tulaji sailed towards Anjanvel to prove his superior ability.

Manaji too did not feel dejected and resolved to attain the higher title of Sawai Sarkhel by carrying out some notable and exemplary deed⁸. However, Shahu preferred to honour Tulaji with the title of Sarkhel as he was pleased with his initiative of recovering bravely Anjanvel. Next year, in December 1744, Marathas and Tulaji jointly vowed to fight the war against the Siddi and resolved to annex the small region which still remained under him. The Peshwa, Balaji Baji Rao had managed to convince the British to be neutral in this fresh war. Shahu too dispatched two letters to the British Governor in Bombay in this regard. Tulaji beefed up naval forces around Underi and Anjanvel. Since Underi was under great threat, Siddi Bahlo sent a emissary to Bombay to apprise the British about the imminent danger to the island

from Tulaji, and to appeal for immediate help. In response, the British Governor soon dispatched 150-strong squadron under James Stirling to assist the Siddi. The British gave the impression that their aid was against the Angria and not the Marathas. The immediate repercussion of this was that Tulaji interrupted the assault on Underi and Anjanvel for a while. But he soon returned on the scene when the British resorted to massive formation of their troops in the vicinity. Finally, he did capture Anjanvel and Gowalkot before the onset of monsoon⁹.

On the other hand, Manaji showed interest in intercepting the Portuguese merchant fleet by his own squadron. The fight that ensued lasted for six days and according to José Freire de Mascarenhas, the Portuguese frigate Nossa Senhora da Oliveira and Penha da França gave a valiant fight against the superior squadron of Manaji who ultimately withdrew without any success. After this incident, it appears that he was striving hard to be in good books of the Portuguese¹⁰.

The Portuguese had already befriended the chief of Sawantwadi and were trying to unite now all the smaller rulers against the Marathas after surrendering their possessions in the North to them. In 1742, they made use of the services of Sunda King and provided him soldiers and war material to seize the fort of Supem¹¹. They desired to have other buffer states as well against the possible assaults of the Marathas and if possible they were planning to recapture the lost territories for which the Portuguese King had

instructed in 1744. The new Viceroy Dom Pedro Miguel de Almeida e Portugal initiated the process of adopting a new policy soon after taking over his office in Goa¹². In the meanwhile, Siddi Hasan had removed his brother Siddi Rahman from the Nawabship of Janjira in 1742. Subsequently, when Hasan died, one Sayyad Allana usurped the power but in the next year, Siddi Rahman, being the rightful heir to it recovered it¹³. Such a type of disorders and uncertainties helped Tulaji indirectly in the seizure of Anjanvel and Gowalkot. In 1746, the Portuguese tried to occupy Alorna and Bicholim (Dicholi) with the support of Sunda King whose men indulged in arson there and forced the residents of Bicholim fort to run away¹⁴. Thereafter, the Peshwa sent Sadashivrao in early 1747 with a contingent of 20,000 Marathas towards Goa to punish the Portuguese and their allies. He soon captured the fortress of Supem and divided the force in two groups, directing one to march separately towards Siveshwar and another to Ankola¹⁵.

The Peshwa was not happy to see the rising power and clout of Angria brothers. His father had established a small fleet but it was so weak that it could not stand against the powerful fleets of Angria brothers. There is a reference to Baji Rao's small fleet in the treaty concluded by him with the British in 1739 and also in the treaty of 1740-41 signed by the governments of Poona and Goa. It was a necessity of the time to own a good fleet to safeguard the newly possessed coastal fortifications. The very first fleet was under the command of Naro Pant who did not possess adequate experience

of naval adventures. Tulaji on the other hand being quite active on the sea was not only well versed in the naval tactics but also had good knowledge of the coastal points. Thus he had aimed at Madgarh and tried to possess it. But the Siddi had left the fort to the Peshwa to frustrate Tulaji's designs. But when Tulaji succeeded in seizing it at the end of 1747, it led to a serious confrontation between him and the Pratinidhi of Vishalgarh, Amatya of Bawda and Sawant of Sawantwadi. Finding Madgarh as the ideal and strategic point he made it his base and began his assaults on all sides thus coming in conflict with the feudal chiefs of the territory, who ultimately defeated him with the aid from the Peshwa. In the following year, forces of Sawant inflicted defeat on him at Kudal and chased him as far as Sangva near Ratnagiri devastating his areas¹⁶.

In reality, the year 1747 was not at all favourable for Tulaji as it brought more setbacks for him. The Portuguese Viceroy, Dom Pedro Miguel de Almeida e Portugal as early as in February 1747 had instructed his envoy based in Bombay to find out from the British there if they were interested in joining the Dutch and the Portuguese in reducing Tulaji Angria. He also had disclosed to him that Tulaji had attacked Mangalore in South Canara and pillaged the Portuguese factory there. The Angria had also captured at Panane several Dutch ships carrying copper and spices. The Viceroy's letter also revealed that he was planning an attack against Tulaji by the end of that summer¹⁷. Though Tulaji had opened negotiations for peace with the Portuguese

in the previous year, he had also indulged in the looting of their factory at Mangalore in November, while the parleys were still on¹⁸. This again proves the point that like his elder brother Sambhaji and father Kanhoji, he too wanted that all others should buy permits from him for the safety of their vessels.

By this time, Tulaji had harassed almost all the naval powers and spared none. Way back in 1742, he captured one of the most sophisticated French ships of the time Jupiter which La Bourdonnais had sent to Goa for procuring provisions. In 1743, he had seized another French ship Nptune off Calicut. But later on, soon they sought his amity and ultimately he changed his very stance towards them. In April 1743, he had intercepted the Ketch Salamander forcing it to seek shelter at Kolaba. On 22nd November 1743, his ships fired at the British convoy continuously for twelve hours. At the same time, his another squadron had attacked the Portuguese frigate for a couple of days. Within two years, in 1745, he confronted afresh the British vessels. In December 1745 it was reported from Tellicherry that the Angria's fleet was in its vicinity awaiting the merchant vessels, and there it had confiscated the Princess Augusta and the Expedition. In February 1746, he forcibly took away three of the five Gujarati ships and in November the incident of looting the Portuguese factory at Mangalore had taken place. In January 1747, his fleet captured two Dutch Sloops between Calicut and Tellicherry. In October 1749, he intercepted Commodore James's fleet and took away the Restoration off Gheria. Next year, he dared assault

Commodore Lisle commanding a big fleet and in February 1753, he turned his attention towards three Dutch ships of which two large ones he set afire and took away the third one. Tulaji Angria's power and naval activities on the entire western coast from Cochin in the south to Diu in the north had grown to such an extent that the East India Company had to spend a huge amount every year to save her commerce. Even then it had lost several of its ships to him such as Charlotte, William, Severn, Derby, Restoration, Pilot and Augusta, Dadabady, Rose, Anne and Futta Dowlat from Muscat. Every success spurred him to cherish the dream of becoming the invincible master of the western coast of India¹⁹.

The Portuguese on the other hand maintained good relations with Shahu all these years and offered him costly presents with the intention to achieve political gains. In February 1746, they sent Antonio José Henriques to Shahu with rich presents²⁰. The Marathas under Shahu had become so powerful that his officers posted in the vicinity of Goa also received from the Portuguese famous mangoes from Goa. In 1747 the Portuguese suddenly received the news of Shahu's death and the Viceroy Dom Pedro Miguel de Almeida e Portugal, desired to know the truth immediately. Ultimately, it proved to be wrong. Shahu died much later on 15th December 1749²¹. As long as Shahu was alive, the Peshwa could not take a strong action against Tulaji, though he approached the Portuguese for naval assistance against him and they were willing to join him²². However, Tulaji himself appeared quite sincere in the move for a peace treaty with them. He

tried to be friendly with the Portuguese and even restored seized goods-laden ships of Upea Camotim in 1748 as a good gesture²³. Now he had even begun to treat the Portuguese well and when a Portuguese ship wrecked near Gheria, his role in its salvage and kind treatment was appreciated by the Viceroy in a letter dated 19th July 1748. The same letter also discloses that Tulaji Angria was to open negotiations with the Marathas at Satara and the Viceroy had wished him success²⁴. Accordingly, Tulaji did go to Satara and paid his homage to Shahu and respects to Raja's two queens²⁵.

It is pertinent to note that though Tulaji had returned the captured vessel of Upea Camotim, some goods worth 8000 xerafins were found missing. When the parleys for the treaty were still going on in Goa, he did not hesitate to seize two other trading ships belonging to Goa's merchants in December 1749. The peace parleys veered round seven proposals sent by Tulaji on 22nd May 1749 to the Viceroy. The latter however returned them with modifications. It would be worth-while to look at what Tulaji had proposed and what modifications the Viceroy had made and what he had to say on them. The main points were as follows:-

1. Tulaji proposed friendship between the two 'brothers' (Tulaji and Viceroy); the Viceroy's help to Tulaji against the Bhonsles of Sawantwadi and the mutual co-operation was to be guaranteed on all occasions.

The Viceroy accepted the proposals of friendship which might become permanent provided the past offences were

forgotten and all the traders repressed by Tulaji were restored with their goods. The alliance could be offensive and defensive against their common enemies.

2. Tulaji proposed to assist the Portuguese to recover Bharatgarh from the Bhonsles in return for their help to recapture his areas from the Bhonsles. In case the Portuguese were not ready to do so, they were to supply men to him at his expense.

The Viceroy agreed to help each other with men but the amount was to be paid by both the parties.

3. Dhulap, Tulaji's envoy had instructions to return with Portuguese soldiers, as part of the aid. In case the Viceroy felt that they could not be sent soon, Tulaji was to send his representatives after the monsoon for the purpose.

The Viceroy agreed to send the men only in September as the monsoon was nearing and he expected the ships bringing soldiers from Lisbon by September (1749).

4. Tulaji was ready to receive the Portuguese vessels in his ports as they had been treated earlier during the time of the Great Sarkhel (Kanhoji Angria).

The Viceroy desired that the vessels of both the parties should navigate freely without any obstacles, and both should assist each other whenever the help was required and the Portuguese subjects should not be asked to carry his permits.

5. Tulaji wanted to establish factories in some ports coming under the jurisdiction of the Portuguese after signing the treaty.

The Viceroy agreed to consider any such proposal.

6. If the Viceroy sent his men to help Tulaji and in case the treaty was concluded, Tulaji would send his troops to accompany the Portuguese upto Neutim if they were impeded by the rains.

The Viceroy pointed out that there was no point in sending the men as the monsoon was nearing.

7. The treaty was to be signed after these proposals were agreed upon.

The Viceroy expressed his agreement to this proposal.

As agreed, Tulaji sent his envoy Ali Ahmad in September 1749 to Goa in order to get soldiers from there. But the Viceroy told him that the Portuguese soldiers were accustomed to a different way of life and would require much more than any corps of native soldiers needed. Therefore, he sought Rs.200,000 towards the supply of the Portuguese troops, their provisions, armament etc. and pointed out that the soldiers were ever ready but they could be asked to march only after finalising the treaty²⁷.

The vacillation on the part of the Portuguese exhausted Tulaji's patience as troops did not arrive in

September as expected. Therefore, in November he raided Mangalore once again and carried away two Portuguese vessels.

The helpless Viceroy could do nothing except warning its ruler Basavappa to fortify the precincts failing which the Portuguese were to leave the place²⁸.

Turning now to the British, they had been asked by the Portuguese to join them against Tulaji but they did not respond on account of their engrossment in a serious problem in Surat which had developed on account of the death of Tegbakat Khan, the Governor in 1746. While the British backed Mia Achan in the struggle of succession, the Siddi Masud desired Safdar Khan to be the Governor of Surat. However, the British succeeded to install Mia Achan to the coveted governorship of the city and he occupied the castle as well. Obviously, the annoyed Siddi became restless and in the following years he successfully procured the aid of the Dutch. In 1751 he also enlisted the support of Damaji Gaikwad for Safdar Khan on the promise that half revenues of the city of Surat would go to him (Gaikwad). The immediate consequences of this move was that Mia Achan was compelled to give up the governorship and retire to the castle. As a precautionary measure, Siddi Masud anchored his fleet at the mouth of the Tapti under the pretext of inclement weather. Siddi Masud, with rich experience in naval warfare seized the opportunity to surround his castle. Consequently, Mia Achan surrendered the castle and took refuge in Bombay. The Peshwa who bore the feelings of jealousy towards Gaikwad on account of rising clout joined hands with the British for driving out Safdar Khan as well as Siddi Masud from Surat. They planned

a two-pronged attack. While the British sent their fleet to assault Surat, the Peshwa asked his army to initiate action on land. But soon, Gaikwad succeeded in convincing the Peshwa and he assured to give the latter one half of his share of the Surat revenues. The end result was that the Peshwa withdrew his army, and the British returned to Bombay. Safdar Khan felt more free and attacked the British establishments there. It resulted into major losses for the British as their gardens and castles in Surat were taken over, the factors were jailed and their chief factor was compelled to sign in November 1751 a treaty with the Governor, while Siddi Masud agreeing to send away from Surat all the soldiers serving in the East India Company there ----, European as well as Indians. The treaty however was renounced by the British government in Bombay and in its place a fresh set of articles was drawn up in March 1752 with Siddi Masud under which their seized property was to be restored to them and they were to be paid an amount of Rs.2,00,000 for the expenses they had incurred in their fights and towards the loss suffered by them at the custom house. All the oxen coaches, oxen, horses, etc. seized from the British were also to be returned to them, besides their gardens, rice and men. Siddi Masud had also agreed that he would ask Safdar Khan to vacate the castle soon²⁹.

By all indications, the Portuguese on the other hand had to lie low because not only Tulaji but also the Peshwa's men were harassing them. The Portuguese Secretary at Goa was informed by the Subedar of Sunda that Maratha chiefs, Murar Rao and Daulat Rao Ghorpade had moved down southwards from

Supem with a detachment of 4000 in February 1749³⁰. Next year too, the news was received by the Portuguese Adjutant-General, Pedro de Rego Barreto, that Usapkars had taken one Shenvi captive from Verem alongwith others. They were detained at Wadi for a ransom of 2000 xerafins. According to the report, there were 500 horse and 3000 Marathas at Wadi to attack Bardez during the night of 'Shimga Poornima', (in the last month of Hindu calendar year) as they had already captured Velguem. There was a possibility of looting Usgaon and Sanquelim and even Phonda³¹. In January 1751, Subedar of Sunda Kingdom, Krishna Rao Gurkar further brought to the notice of the Portuguese Secretary at Goa that in 1746-47 Sadoba had assured all help to Jairam Sawant of Supem and the same had been confirmed by Ramchandra Malhar. He added that Sadoba had struck a deal with Bhonsle of Sawantwadi, who had agreed to pay 'Chauth' from his territories, and was planning to attack Goa³².

Ranged against such forces, the Portuguese did not have peace on Goa's borders and Tulaji had already become a menace for them in the sea. In 1750, the Angria had pounced upon the fort of Honavar under the Portuguese and captured it. Though he left it soon, he carried away with him 1500 prominent men from there to use them for ransom. At the same time, he sacked Gokarna too³³. By this time, apparently Tulaji was surrounded by the enemies on every side like the Bhonsles of Sawantwadi, the Portuguese, the British and the Peshwa. But he now had the backing of a new emerging force and it was none other than Tarabai in Satara. Tarabai, the

Regent Queen, had the knowledge of Tulaji's belligerence towards the Peshwa and it was quite possible that she was apprised by Tulaji himself about his uneasy relations with the Peshwa when he visited Satara and met the Queen. She lent her support to Tulaji to attack the Peshwa's places on the Konkan coast. She had also established contact with the Portuguese Viceroy Francisco de Assiz, Marques de Tavora against the Peshwa. Consequently, it is observed that Tulaji had besieged Vishalgadh in early 1753, though his assault was thwarted³⁴.

In concert with such an attitude of Tarabai, it is worth perusing a very interesting report about her designs against the Peshwa. Monsieur Bussy, the French Commander of troops in Aurangabad disclosed that the widow of Shahu (Tarabai) had sent to him a representative to have a venture against the Peshwa and she had not only collected a huge army for the purpose but had also offered the Portuguese Viceroy, the help to recapture Bassein. She was also in touch with Salabat Jung, Mughal Viceroy of the Deccan, who was determined to do the maximum possible damage to the Peshwa³⁵. Hopefully, the Viceroy, Marques de Tavora also invited Tulaji in 1752 to join hands with him and Salabat Jung against their common foe, the Peshwa as the Portuguese had a royal directive to retrieve the lost province of Bassein³⁶. However, nothing came out of this project as the Peshwa defeated Salabat Jung who had to sign a peace treaty with him³⁷. Overjoyed with this victory, the Peshwa then made up his mind to vanquish Tulaji. During the life time of Shahu,

he would not let the Peshwa to annihilate the Angrias. Chimnaji Appa too bore a grudge against Tulaji and he therefore proposed a joint attack against the powerful Angria. The Peshwa approached the British in early 1754 and they were ready to assault Tulaji's Gheria for having been subjected to maximum loss at his hands. As a follow-up measure, in March 1755, a treaty was signed between the Marathas and the British. According to its terms, the naval operations were to be under the control of the British and the ships, treasures, guns etc. which were to be seized from the Angria were to be shared equally³⁸. These ominous signals made Tulaji panicky and he solicited from the Portuguese the urgent aid because he had already surrendered Suvarndurg and three other fortifications to the British squadron led by James. Though the British forces returned to Bombay thereafter, the army of Peshwa continued to exert pressure on land by making inroads into Angria's territory and seizing the forts of Anjanvel, Gowalkot and Ratnagiri. In October next, he further wrote to the Viceroy, Dom Luis Mascarenhas that the amity between him and the Portuguese should be considered long-standing though it had not been formally confirmed by any treaty. He vowed by his Dharma (Religion) that he would not infringe upon this friendship any more and sent Ismail Khan, in whom the Portuguese had trust as they believed his words reflected the true feelings of the Angria. Soon he deputed three more representatives to draw up finally the treaty which would aim against the Peshwa³⁹. Ultimately, the treaty was signed on 5th November 1755. In it, Tulaji expressed his regrets over the

differences in the past and the Viceroy appreciated that gesture and pledged to protect him. The Viceroy thus was to provide him with 500 soldiers for his defence but they were to garrison Gheria and were not to be engaged elsewhere without the explicit orders from their commander. Tulaji was not only to pay them their wages promptly but also to provide them food provisions at the rates prevalent then in Goa. Also, the Portuguese soldiers were to be paid in Goa itself thereby helping them to equip themselves well. As pork, coconut oil, mutton etc. were not easily available in Tulaji's areas, he was to purchase the same from Goa. Moreover, Tulaji was to pay a gift or donation worth Rs.2,00,000 and as a guarantee for signing the treaty, he was to station three envoys as hostages in Goa till the return of the Portuguese soldiers from the war front. The Viceroy was to send a company of bombardiers to Gheria on receipt of Rs.1,00,000, while the remaining amount was to be paid within 20 days failing which the remaining aid was not to be sent to Gheria. Strangely, the Portuguese soldiers were not to fight against the British as the treaty of alliance existed between England and Portugal⁴⁰.

The Peshwa also urged upon the Portuguese in November 1755 not to render any help to the Angria as he himself claimed to be their friend. But ignoring his request, the Viceroy did send 500 soldiers to Tulaji on receiving Rs.2,00,000 from him. He however assured the Peshwa on 1st January 1756 that the little aid rendered to Tulaji would not come in his way or in the existing Maratha-Portuguese friendship and defended that the Portuguese soldiers were

sent there by him to save Tulaji's family in order to prevent any molestation of them⁴¹.

Curiously enough, the Portuguese had played their cards well and they not only humiliated Tulaji but extracted a large amount from him. Their aid to him was practically of no use and as soon as the monsoon receded the allied parties made the fresh bid of assault on Gheria. Admiral Walson who had arrived in India with a royal squadron had the instruction from the British authorities in Madras to proceed to the west coast to assist the onslaught against the Angria.

Lord Clive, the hero of Arcot had accompanied him with a warship of strong naval force. On land, the Maratha forces including cavalry and soldiers led by Khandoji Mankar and Samsher Bahadur pillaged the regions of Angria. The Maratha fleet also remained stand-by with that of the British. In early February 1756, East India Company's marine wing arrived there and surrounded Gheria on 12th February. An accidental shot hit on one of the Angria's vessels on the day setting his entire fleet of 70 vessels ablaze. The net result was the surrender by Tulaji to the Maratha commander. Clive seized this opportunity and occupied the fort with a large booty, guns and munition. The British now demanded from the Maratha Commander to hand over Tulaji to them. However, the latter ruled out any such surrender of Tulaji to them. As a tit for tat, the British too refused to hand over the fort to the Marathas till the Peshwa registered a strong protest to the British government against its violation of a solemn assurance. Finally, the allies agreed to a compromise on October 12, 1756 under which Gheria was passed over to the

Marathas, and the British in lieu took possession of Bankot and Himatgarh and ten villages around. Tulaji remained confined by the Marathas till his death in 1786 in the fort of Daulatabad where he had been transferred in 1767 from the fort of Ahmadnagar. Since there was a practice prevailing during the times of Angria and the Marathas of allowing the Siddi a 'Chouthai' or quarter part of the customs, the Marathas assured the Siddi of the continuance of it in future too. The Marathas and the British provided now each other trading facilities in their respective ports. However, they banned the Dutch goods at Rajpuri, and prevented them from trading there⁴².

In the meantime, in 1752, Siddi Masud while maintaining amicable relations with Safdar Khan, the Governor of Surat, and the Dutch arrogated to himself all the reins of power. The disquiet that had ensued at Surat for over three years had still persisted till Siddi Masud expired in January 1756. The British on learning about his death sent immediately a strong contingent to Surat with a view to curb the expected disturbances. By this time, the British had experienced that the Angrias, the Portuguese and the late Siddi Masud had one after another ceased to be troublesome to them and they no longer posed any danger to them. Thus, they now had to contain only the powerful Marathas. In the meanwhile, the son of the late Siddi Masud, Siddi Ahmad Khan succeeded him and he being young bereft of the qualities of his father, disturbed the peace in Surat once again. The Dutch in the meantime had lent their support to one Ali Nawaz Khan, the rival of their old ally Safdar Khan⁴³. It may be

stated here that one Faris Khan had been adopted as his heir by Safdar Khan who had sought the help of the British offering them the post of the Admiral if they could push out the Siddi from the castle. The offer however was turned down on account of the fluid political climate. Safdar Khan expired in 1758 and despite the serious efforts made by Faris Khan, claimant to the post, he was succeeded by Ali Nawaz Khan, the supporter of the Siddi and the Dutch. Those who backed Faris Khan proposed to the British that he should be installed as the Governor of the city and that the British should look after the castle as well as the fleet. They also pledged to give them five annual payments of Rs.2,00,000. The British had shown the inclination to the offer but the treaty was never signed as the Peshwa was concerned of the growing clout of the British authority and had even threatened to attack Bombay. He wanted to secure his control over Janjira and Surat. But before the end of 1758, Mia Achan who was staying in Bombay proceeded to Surat and ousted Ali Nawaz Khan from the governorship of the city through the strong backing of Siddi Ahmad. True, he did establish himself in Surat but Siddi Ahmad turned so powerful that he did not allow him any scope in the administration by appointing his own officers. Mia Achan objected to such a type of high-handedness and soon a feeling of discord developed between him and the Siddi. As the government of the city was weak and not popular enough, there was a risk that the Marathas might intervene. The traders from the city, requested the British authority there to take over the charge of the castle as well as the fleet. Taking into consideration the strong sentiments of the merchants who were

on their side and being emboldened by the arrival of a squadron and the administrative acumen of Mr. Spencer, their chief at Surat, the British government in Bombay resolved to make a bid to drive out Siddi Ahmad from Surat. While doing so, the British had taken adequate measures to keep off the Marathas from this feud and had impressed upon them the necessity of ousting Siddi from there if the trade was to be saved from ruin. They also promised them that the annual yield would be equally divided into three parts, one would be passed over to the Peshwa, one to the Nawab of Surat and one to themselves⁴⁴.

Surprisingly, the Dutch also came into picture on account of their stakes in the trade at Surat and on the western coast. In 1756, they tried to establish themselves at Danda-Rajpuri, which action was not liked by the British. They could not tolerate the very idea of a Dutch establishment there. They therefore sought the clarification from the Siddi who informed them that he was unaware of the fact that the British were at loggerheads with the Dutch till he received the President's letter. He revealed that the Dutch ships at Danda-Rajpuri had reached there much before he received the President's letter and he had already denied them a plot of land for building up the factory though they had offered Rs.40,000 per year as well as any assistance in times of need. He defended his stand towards the Dutch stating Janjira belonged to the King and he dared not do anything without his orders. He elaborated further that it was time that he had allowed the Dutch to send their vessels for trading in his territory, and trusted that the British

would not blame him for this because he viewed the interest of his own country's welfare more than anything else. At the same time, he made it clear that the Dutch would not be permitted to establish themselves in Janjira as it expected the help from the Almighty and the Company to defend itself against all foes⁴⁵.

However, it is apparent that the Siddi had sort of a deal with the Dutch because when the British assaulted the garrison of Siddi in Surat fort, he did not surrender the fort. British had to launch a two-pronged attack from the land and the river on the Siddi's garden. Siddis retaliated fiercely. The British had to grease the palm of the Dutch chief there and it was on account of the complicity of the Dutch and some Siddi's officers that the besieged were subdued. It was agreed now that Mia Achan would continue to be the Governor on the condition that Faris Khan was made his deputy and the British were given the custody of the castle and the fleet's subsidy. Mia Achan agreed and signed the accord on 4th March 1759. When the Siddi was ready to hand over the castle to the British, the Maratha officers sensing that they would lose their control over the fort and the fleet effected a blockade of the city from the side of the land. The British dispatched a message to Nana at Poona and succeeded in obtaining his instructions to end the blockade. And they did succeed in obtaining Sanads from Gazi-ud-Din who acted on behalf of the Emperor. Marathas were negligent and were unaware of the fast developments that were taking place in the British camp as well as the Mughal Court. The

Poona government lodged its protest to the British on the ground that they being the main advisers of the Emperor, Gazi-ud-Din had no authority to issue the Sanads without their consent. The British retorted that the Sanads for them were as just and legal as the Sanads by which the Peshwa claimed to involve himself in the matter of Surat⁴⁶.

It goes without saying that it was a strategical defeat for the Peshwa and a major gain for the British, which prompted the former to concentrate on the capture of Janjira in order to restore his sullied reputation. The Portuguese were not unaware of his designs as the Siddi had already written to the Viceroy Manoel de Saldanha e Albuquerque, Conde de Ega for securing his help against the Marathas. The Viceroy responded on 2nd October 1758 to Siddi Mohammad Yakut Khan that he knew the matter well through his letter and through João Gomes de Almeida. He excused himself to do anything for being engaged in some urgent matter, but assured him that he would not allow others to take benefit⁴⁷.

For understandable reasons, the Peshwa was restless and driven to desperation to seize Janjira, and he pinned hopes to capture it as early as possible. But he did not realise that his navy was not strong enough to withstand the European naval fleets. The British too did not assist him even when he sought their support to capture Janjira because the East India Company desired to maintain Janjira as a buffer against Marathas. Being rebuffed on the issue by the British, the Peshwa approached the French and even discussed

to have an alliance with them on the condition of occupying Janjira himself and hand over Bombay to the French on winning the war⁴⁸. However, the plan just remained on a paper and nothing tangible could be achieved. He also arranged for parleys through his Vakil, Vamanji Mahadev, with the Portuguese in Goa on the same issue as well as his onward march in Canara⁴⁹. And on 25th December 1759, he succeeded in signing a contract with the Viceroy of Goa, Conde de Ega under which the Portuguese were to help him in conquering three forts of the Siddi on a payment of Rs.25,000⁵⁰.

It might be recalled that the Portuguese had not forgotten the loss of Bassein and Chaul to the Marathas. Moreover in 1750, a plot was brought to light in which some Portuguese officers were found guilty and ready to hand over Daman to the Marathas⁵¹. It is difficult to believe that under these circumstances how the Peshwa would convince the Portuguese or for that matter the British that they should help him against Janjira. Also, it is astonishing that while the Maratha forces were making impressive gains far away, why the same could not be done in Konkan. They had already snatched Chaul and Bassein from the Portuguese despite a stiff resistance. A closer scrutiny points out that the Peshwa's approach to the Portuguese for getting Janjira was aimed at to neutralise the British naval force. Such was the naval weakness of the Marathas that they had to depend on other powers as far as Janjira was concerned. No serious efforts were ever made by Shahu or the Peshwa to win over the confidence of Tulaji, nor was there any attempt to unite both

the Angria brothers against the Europeans or the Siddis. On the contrary, the Marathas felt so jealous of their naval power and bases on the coastline that they themselves enlisted European support in reducing Tulaji and thus lost a vital power that might have been successfully used against the British or the Portuguese in future. Even after occupying Vijaydurg, the Peshwa paid no attention to improve the Maratha navy in any way despite knowing its importance during those times. There was no dearth of Europeans who could have joined the Maratha navy as was done during Kanhoji's time. But there was no motivation from the Court of Peshwa to encourage such an exercise. The Portuguese were well aware of this weakness of the Marathas and they fully exploited it. The second agreement between the Peshwa and the Viceroy, Conde de Ega took place on 20th March 1760 and by that time, the amount to be paid to the Portuguese for conquering Siddi's forts had gone up to Rs.1,00,000 towards the services of 600 Portuguese soldiers. Of this, the Portuguese were to get Rs.50,000 as advance money for preparing the attack, and the remaining amount of Rs.50,000 was to be paid after the capture of Janjira. In addition, payment for 600 soldiers was to be made for twelve months. The fort of Phonda and Supem were to be given to Sunda King who was to pay Rs.1,00,000 as tribute after the conquest of Janjira and Cansa⁵². On 24th March 1760, instructions were issued by the Viceroy, Conde de Ega to the Captain of Sea and War, Manoel Caetano Gomes da Silva carrying two battalions and four Machuas to the coast of the North to hold parleys with Ramaji Mahadeo after landing there with provisions⁵³. On the same day, a representation was sent by the Peshwa

stating that since the last treaty of Poona, there had been some occasions of severing the ties and hence the treaty was to be ratified by adding some new clauses. Sardesai Vishnu Naik and Madaji Keshav were his envoys and the Viceroy authorised Belchior José Vaas de Carvalho to adjust the peace which was to be signed by the Viceroy and the Peshwa⁵⁴.

However, the Portuguese were not so eager as was the case with the Peshwa and the delay was utilised by the Siddi effectively. The Portuguese had sent in March 1760 only a small force under João Manoel de Azambuja in the vicinity of Rajpuri to assist Ramaji Mahadeo Barve. The real object of this force was not to participate in the war but to survey the spot and to prepare for the next expedition there which was to leave after the monsoon. In April, the shrewd Siddi raised Portuguese flag in his fort and created confusion for the Marathas⁵⁵.

In May, the British informed the Peshwa that they would not remain quiet to see the annihilation of their old friend who then had retained only one port. They remained neutral till then making efforts to bring peace between the Peshwa and the Siddi but since the former had brought the Portuguese, their old enemies for help, they would not allow the destruction of the Siddi Ibrahim Yakut Khan who himself had come to Bombay seeking help from the British and was escorted back to Janjira by their fleet⁵⁶. In June, the Peshwa wrote to Mahadaji Pant and Desai Vishnu Naik that it was not merely enough that the Portuguese had sent little help in Rajpuri as the British would prove stronger in

opposing the combine. He directed them that in case the Viceroy Conde de Ega and his Secretary remain quiet saying that their King had good relations with the King of England, they should ask them as to what was the use of the friendship of the Portuguese for him? Hence he advised them to conclude the treaty at the earliest. Earlier in May, he had conveyed his unhappiness to his envoy in Goa that the Portuguese had sent some men with equipment at a time when the monsoon was nearing and had not done what they had promised. He had further added that since the Portuguese were the best soldiers among the Europeans, they should help him conquer Janjira and Cansa⁵⁷.

Talks continued for concluding the treaty and according to the document dated 24th October 1760, only two forts Cansa and Janjira were to be conquered and Rs.25,000 were to be arranged from the Kingdom of Bidrur⁵⁸. However, the final treaty was signed on 26th October 1760 in which the Peshwa (Nana) undertook to hand over to the Viceroy the province of Zambaulim, Panchmahal, Supem, Sanguem and Mardangad in Phonda, in order that the latter might restore them to the King of Sunda. The Viceroy was to send 500 men to capture Janjira and Cansa, who were to be passed over to Nana, and the latter was bound to pay Rs.1,00,000 every year to the King of Portugal, which amount was to be secured as a tribute from the King of Sunda. The Nana was to pay an additional sum of Rs.50,000 towards the service of the Portuguese troops⁵⁹.

Thus a valuable time from March to October end was spent in finalising the treaty with the Portuguese. When the

Viceroy, Conde de Ega ordered to conquer the forts for the Pant Pradhan in November, the Portuguese appeared quite active⁶⁰. He also wrote to Ramaji Mahadeo in December to make all the preparation for war and be ready in all respects including trenches etc. and to see that the British fleet did not come anywhere near Janjira failing which the latter was to be held responsible equally⁶¹. As directed by the Viceroy, the Portuguese Commander Azambuja also wrote a letter to Ramaji Pant on 23rd December blaming Mahadeo for his exhortations to enter in an action against Cansa that brought discredit to two potential powers. He also brought to his notice that Marathas had spread false rumours that his fleet had admitted the Siddi and mentioned that out of 246 men, the Portuguese had lost 75 on account of starvation and some returned to Goa having fallen sick as a result of the same⁶². It is interesting to note the strange game played deliberately by the Portuguese Commander who had been instructed by the Viceroy intentionally to create the problem for the Peshwa. The Portuguese certainly had some secret understanding with the Siddi and the same is reflected in a letter dated 18th February 1761 written by the Viceroy Conde de Ega to the Siddi⁶³. The long instructions issued by the Viceroy within three days on 20th February to the Commandant of the fleet and Colonel of the Sea, Caetano Correia de Sa reveal that the Portuguese were interested in extracting only money and the issue of the succour was to be dramatised in such a way that nothing was to be disclosed. What kind of help the Portuguese were going to render to the Peshwa in his war to capture Janjira is discernible from these strange

instructions. He wrote to the Colonel: "First take the payment before entering into any action; the shortage of men should not be conveyed to Nana; if advance money is not paid, return to Goa with entire force leaving behind the Maratha forces and hold them responsible stating that Nana's vassals do not want to serve his master; if the Marathas set themselves in formation for the war, you make false attacks all the time without being exposed; since the British are jealous of this alliance, take care and if they arrive there before the operation, you suspend the action till you examine their determination and if they come to favour the Siddi, tell them that peace exists between both the European countries, but if the British reach there after the action, you continue the action without bothering them and try to know what for they had come and try your level best to avoid any encounter with them; this friendship with the Marathas is more transient than genuine and if they profit in the war, it will ruin us; hence show all the confidence on face but in reality do nothing because you have been living in India for many years and know the infidelity of these barbarians; it is already late for the enterprise of Cansa and Janjira and that is the reason why prepare in such a way that the war prolongs for a year; make fool of the Maratha Generals; there will be many soldiers who suffer from diseases and hence after initial greetings, issue orders to know the number of the sick and get the Maratha ships emptied promptly to transport them back to Goa; the ship Conceição carrying you is already weak and it should not be exposed to any fire from Janjira because it has aboard the gunpowder and war material; if the fate gives chance for taking Cansa, take it"⁶⁴.

Thus, the Portuguese were fully prepared for the artificial and deceptive war and the Viceroy, Conde de Ega ironically wrote to the Peshwa on 2nd March expecting good success for restoring him Cansa and Janjira⁶⁵. However, the British did not give any chance to the Portuguese to resort to even the deceptive war because when the Portuguese fleet arrived off Rajpuri on 21st February 1761, they noticed that the British flag was already flying over the two fortresses and their fleet was ready for any eventuality in the harbour. When the Portuguese ships anchored off the harbour, they were approached by an English Officer who showed them the documentary evidence that the forts had already been surrendered by the Siddi to them⁶⁶. Soon, we find the Viceroy, Conde de Ega writing to the Siddi on 13th May 1761 that what he had personally spoken to him about last year, he did not find it proper now to show him in public interest and expected that the Siddi would not end the old friendship⁶⁷.

In the meanwhile, the Marathas had suffered one of the greatest defeats on the famous war field of Panipat by Ahmad Shah Abdali of Afghanistan on 14th January 1761. The loss in human lives on the side of the Peshwa was so great that there was hardly any home in Maharashtra that did not mourn the loss of a family member. Among those was Vishwas Rao who was shot dead. Sadashiv Rao Bhau fought desperately and recklessly in vain and fell dead battling alongwith several Marathas. When the sad news was conveyed to the Peshwa who was himself suffering from a serious ailment, he did not have any strength to face this national calamity. He

soon died, grief-stricken at Poona on 23rd June 1761⁶⁸.

To resume the thread of our account on the Siddi, Manaji Angria had rendered assistance to the Peshwa in his attack against Janjira, but he too died in 1758. Two years later, his son Raghaji took part in seizing Underi from the Siddi in 1760 and it was renamed as Jayadurg. Janjira was also in distress but Sadashivrao Bhau had been suddenly asked to proceed towards the North. However, on 13th October 1760, the Peshwa demolished the fort of Rajkot and destroyed the Masjid⁶⁹. However, the British intervened and mediated for peace, finally the treaty was concluded with the new Peshwa on 14th September 1761. In this treaty, two clauses among others, which deserve special attention here, are summarised below:-

1. Some responsible people were to be sent immediately for restoring the whole jurisdiction and territories of Rajpuri to the Siddi of Janjira so that he would get what was in his possession before the attack and invasion; his country was not to be molested in future by any of the Maratha officers or subjects.
2. All the prisoners of wars were to be sent to Bombay by both the parties within a month and they were to be restored their freedom and henceforth all hostilities between the Marathas and the Siddis were to be ceased⁷⁰.

The Siddi corresponded with the British authority in Bombay on several occasions demanding the stay of

British contingent in Janjira because he observed that the Marathas apart from devastating his region, had also brought misery to his people. As a result, they resorted to pillaging in the area. According to him, to put Janjira in its original state, he would require 15 years' labour in case it was not attacked again. He lamented that the Marathas besides ruining all the gardens, took away 16 guns from Khokree as well as several items pertaining to Janjira fort in the past and that he was denied his share of nearly 18 years' produce of the area. However, after signing the treaty with the British, the Siddi's men went on rampage in Maratha region, pillaging and putting to death the people. The regent, Siddi Ibrahim died in September 1762 and was succeeded by Siddi Yakut Khan and as per the practice in vogue, the British presented a congratulating gift of ascension, 'Sirpaw' to him⁷¹.

Siddi Yakut Khan however took up the Nawabship by the will of Siddi Ibrahim, ignoring the claim of Siddi Abdul Rahim who was his nearest heir. Rahim strived hard to occupy Janjira by force and he procured the Maratha aid clandestinely to fight against Yakut who was backed by the British⁷².

There was altogether a change in the relations of the British with the Marathas specially after the latter were defeated at Panipat. In May 1765, the British seized Malwan and the fort of Reddi was handed over to Bhonsle of Sawantwadi, his earlier possession. The Marathas were now aware that the British had assured aid to the Siddi and would

provide arm andd ammunition to Haider Ali Khan who was posing a great challenge to the Marathas in Karnataka. The son of Tulaji had also escaped from their custody and fled to Bombay⁷³.

Though the treaty had been signed between the Siddi of Janjira and the Peshwa in 1762-63, out of 11 Mahals, $5\frac{1}{2}$ Mahals belonged to the Siddi and the remaining $5\frac{1}{2}$ to the Peshwa so that each administered his own area as was the case earlier⁷⁴. The Siddi had contacted Haider Ali to launch an attack against the Marathas. Haider Ali responded him well stating that if the British joined him, together they would destroy all the Marathas by raiding them on all sides simultaneously. He felt that Marathas would not be able to face such a joint attack⁷⁵.

A notable feature of the era was that the Portuguese power too had already declined rapidly. The rivers of Surat were not safe for them from 1750s. They feared to disembark their goods there on account of the disorders created by the robbers as per the reports received from the Portuguese Officer Joseph Cohen in the Port of Surat⁷⁶. However, they were on good terms with other powers in order to keep their remaining possessions safe. Peshwa Madhav Rao had a firm hold over his regions by 1766 and till then the British strategy to occupy Salsete in the North (near Bombay) or even the islands of Underi and Khanderi had not taken any concrete shape. But with the death of Madhav Rao Peshwa in 1771, the Marathas had a great setback from which they could never

recover. The Portuguese at this time had cordial ties with the Marathas and the Portuguese Governor D. João José de Mello deputed Surgeon Manoel Francisco Gonsalves from Goa to cure the illness of Madhav Rao. The physician had taken with him some special herbs from Goa to treat Madhav Rao, but he had a painful death⁷⁸. The Portuguese also maintained simultaneously good relations with the Queen of Kolhapur, Jijabai as is evident from a letter dated 16th May 1766 in which she conveyed to the Portuguese Secretary at Goa the good news of regaining the possession of Sindhudurg fort from the British. She also requested him to supply naval ships, arms and ammunition to strengthen the defence of the fort⁷⁹. With the rise of Haider Ali Khan, the Portuguese found it difficult to get rice from Karnatak ports. A Portuguese document written in code language reveals that the Portuguese informer pleads his authorities at Goa to show a friendly gesture to Haider Ali, who had a lot of money at his disposal at that time and in case no positive response came forth from Goa by way of sending the warships, there was a possibility of the breach in friendship. The document also throws light on the possibility of the type of relations Haider Ali had with the British and the Marathas, though the writer could not gauge their deepness. It also discloses that the Nawab Haider Ali was ready to supply 20,000 bags of rice and even more if needed but forewarned that if nothing came forth from Goa, the port of Mangalore would be closed for the Portuguese vessels. The information obviously pertains prior to the First Mysore War in 1767-69. The political situation of the time was such that Madhav Rao Peshwa had secured the

possessions of all the districts of Mysore to the south-eastward of Sera and Maratha troops were chasing the Nawab on crossing Vardha river. Haider had proceeded towards Bednur, followed by the Marathas. The Nizam and the Marathas were against him and the British were trying to maintain good relations with the latter. But Hyder had apprehended the deceit of the Nizam. The Portuguese stance towards Haider is reflected in a letter dated 31st January 1764 in which the Viceroy Conde de Ega writes to the Secretary of State, Francisco Xavier de Mendonça Furtado that till then he had tried to establish peace with the powers from whom he could extract benefits but it was not possible to pursue the same line for a long time on account of the change of the political climate and savage ambitions of the Asians. He disclosed further that when he had arrived, he found the state on the verge of severing relations with the Bhonsles of Sawantwadi and it was not on peace terms with Sunda kingdom, but he settled the matters with both. The terms of peace with the Marathas, with whom he had a war later on sea and land, were ratified and the war was over. However, a ruler Haider Ali Khan had appeared on the Portuguese borders and he himself was trying to pull him down for his arrogance of a conqueror without sullyng the honour of the Portuguese nation and the Crown and that he was forced to take a risk which in fact was not great⁸⁰.

More serious problems than this were in store for Janjira. Siddi Abdul Rahim has been questioning the authority of Siddi Yakut right from the day of the succession of the latter. The encouragement to Abdul Rahim by Madhav

Rao Peshwa in 1767 against Siddi Yakut further fomented the trouble. Siddi Yakut contacted the British and urged upon them to send two ships to assist him and order Siddi Rahim to come to Bombay. But the British were not in a mood to help him immediately because they had by now established good relations with the Marathas. However, the Maratha threat was imminent by the end of October. Mr. Fletcher sailed off for Janjira aboard the ship Success on 5th November and within two days Maratha galiots were sighted near Cansa fort. Abdul Rahim had approached Visaji Pant, Commander of the Maratha fleet and had already captured the fort of Madgarh which had been kept by the Marathas with them when it should have been passed over to the Siddi according to the treaty of 1761. Now, the Cansa fort waters were infested by the Maratha ships. This caused anxiety for Siddi Yakut who was fully aware that unless the British came to his rescue with an adequate force, Siddi Rahim's men would cause devastation in his area. But the appearance of the British force on the scene did not discourage Rahim whose forces far outnumbered those of the former. It was only when this harsh reality was noted that the British sought reinforcements and forced Rahim to flee to Poona. Thus Yakut occupied the fort of Madgarh in December. But as soon as the British troops left Janjira, Siddi Rahim returned to Goregaon and one of his Chiefs, Ida Khan having been supported by the Marathas seized once again the Madgarh fort from Siddi Yakut. The British were very keen to see Siddi Yakut granting Rahim a pension. Siddi Yakut feared that Madhav Rao Peshwa might take up the cause of Rahim and therefore he agreed for a compromise. He showed

his readiness to give Danda-Rajpuri to him and promised that Janjira would go to him after his death. And the proposal was finally accepted in 1772. Accordingly 14 years later, Siddi Abdul Rahim was installed in Janjira after the death of Siddi Yakut in 1784. But the succession was beset with problems because Siddi Yakut left behind a will bequeathing the dominion to the second son of Abdul Rahim upon his father's death, under the regentship, in case he happened to be a minor of his own friend, Siddi Johar. Rahim too expired shortly. Ignoring the earlier will of Siddi Yakut, he too left a will bequeathing Janjira to his eldest son, Abdul Khureem Khan, alias Balloo Mian. Siddi Johar however strongly defended the will of Yakut and tried to arrest Balloo Mian. But he too ran away to Poona taking with him his younger brother whom Siddi Johar had desired to install. Nana Fadnavis, with the fond hope to annex Janjira, extended his support to Balloo Mian and this tactical move forced Siddi Johar to be in the camp of the British again. He had expressed his readiness for any compromise acceptable to the inhabitants, but he resolved to repel the Marathas and Balloo Mian. Nana, however, conceded the plea of Bombay government to put off or stop the operations until Lord Cornwallis was apprised of the matter⁸¹.

Considering the naval activities in historical perspective, it is observed that Raghaji Angria, who used to live in ostentation had followed the naval tradition of the family. In 1776, he had played a significant role in the capture of the imposter of Sadashiva Rao Bhau. Two years

later, he dared capture a Portuguese warship from Diu, but subsequently he signed a peace treaty with them. However, the fate had dealt more harshly with him. Several ships of his fleet were destroyed in the fire that engulfed it. He passed away in 1793 after enjoying the life in pomp and style. Thereafter, there was clamour for the title followed by the disorder and confusion. But the fact remains that the Angrian navy was no more looked at with awe. In the 19th century, the small Jagir of Manaji passed over to the British in 1839 as there was none directly connected with him to claim it. On the other hand, the Peshwa's navy concentrated its attention now at Gheria and Khanderi where it used to seize the ships of those who did not buy its permits. In 1763, a Dutch vessel was captured by its naval officers off Anjediv and later on they intercepted a Danish ship which was ultimately set free by a Portuguese squadron. According to the Portuguese Viceroy, Conde de Ega, the Maratha fleet had dominated the sea in 1764. Earlier in 1763, they had captured a Portuguese ship coming from Macao, a Pal from Mozambique and some small ships of the Portuguese merchants. However, the Peshwa's fleet was out-dated in contrast with those of the European powers. Yet Gheria still was a risky port for all the trading vessels⁸².

The Maratha Commander Janrao Dhulap in 1770 laid hand on a Portuguese vessel and took into custody its captain and his two sons. It was only at the intervention of a missionary that they were released⁸³. The Portuguese, who at one time had dominated the Indian Ocean in the 16th and 17th

centuries, had to approach ignominiously Madhav Rao Narayan Peshwa for instructing his Captains not to harm the Portuguese ships. Accordingly, the Peshwa had written to the Subedar of Gheria, Gangadhar Govind on 6th April 1771 that it has been brought to his notice by the Portuguese that their vessels plying in the sea were being harassed by his naval personnel and they had seized the sails of some canoes from the sailors of Chopdem. He therefore asked him to return the same taking into consideration the friendship existing between them and the Portuguese⁸⁴.

The British on the contrary, registered continuous advance everywhere in the country. They had already humbled the French on Indian soil. In 1765, they also caused the Mughal Emperor to lose face when he provided succour to the Nawab of Bengal and finally secured royal orders for levying revenue of Bengal. By now, the Marathas also had gained some confidence after the terrible blow at Panipat. In 1770, they mustered courage to move with all preparations towards North India and brought the beleaguered Mughal Emperor, Shah Alam II under their influence by conceding his request to accompany him to his capital thereby extracting certain benefits and privileges. As fate would have it, Madhav Rao Peshwa died young of serious ailment on 8th March 1772 and that proved to be a greater loss than the defeat at Panipat for the Marathas. Upon his death, his younger brother, Narayan Rao succeeded him but was slain at the behest of his ambitious uncle Raghoba in 1773 as he himself desired to wear the mantle of Peshwa. However, Nana Fadnavis and other Maratha Sardars espoused the cause of Madhava Rao Narayan,

the Posthumous son of Narayan Rao, for the title. But Raghoba realising his weakness sought the help of the British government in Bombay⁸⁵. Thus, once more the British got an opportunity to intervene in the internal squabbles among Indian princes. Till then the British were on good terms with the Marathas and in September 1772 Mostyn was deputed to Poona as envoy with the object of acquiring for the East India Company Salsete, Bassein and Karanja, in exchange of Fort Victoria which would go to the Peshwa and in addition to it an assurance that the British would not object to the Marathas securing the acquisition of Rajpuri from the Siddi. But this design met with failure as soon after Mostyn's arrival in Poona, Peshwa Madhav Rao died⁸⁶.

The death of Madhav Rao Peshwa triggered unusual political activities. And soon the situation took a dramatic turn for the worse when Raghoba joined hands with the British in Bombay leading to serious hostilities. Gauging the strength of the British army which was poised for the attack, the Marathas also made preparations for the war. Maratha Chiefs Madhav Rao Gangadhar and Ganesh Babaji sought for reinforcements from Poona on 12th December 1774 on account of the growing strength of the British forces. The British also approached the Siddi for support and he readily responded to help them⁸⁷. And he did keep up his word by openly helping the British against the Marathas though he had signed a treaty with the latter during 1765-1766 which allowed him once again the collection of the revenue from the District of Rajpuri since 1761-1762. Even, the fort of Madgarh which

had been given to the Peshwa Balaji Baji Rao to prevent its seizure by Tulaji Angria, was restored to the Siddi in 1767. Siddi in turn had also conceded that he would not claim duty on the ships laden with government revenue in kind in the port of Tala and Ghosala. In the similar vein, the Marathas were also not to demand any duty on his ships plying through Revdanda with Janjira's revenue in kind. The Dastan of Mandle was formerly the joint possession of the Peshwa and the Siddis of Janjira. With its handing over to the British by the Peshwa, the Siddi was promised the payments of its half revenue⁸⁸.

The change in the stance of the British towards the Marathas offered opportunities to the Portuguese as well. But Nana Fadnavis did not allow at all their interference. Commander Janrao Dhulap had been authorised to keep vigil over the movements of Portuguese fleet. On 12th December 1774, Anand Rao Ram sounded Peshwa of the manoeuvres of the British forces from Bombay through the Salsete creek and urged upon him to rush the reinforcement to defend the fort of Thana⁸⁹. Mostyn who was then in Poona returned to Bombay hastily and briefed the authorities at the meeting of Council of Government of Bombay, which resolved to initiate hostilities. Down southward Siddi of Rajpuri also made preparation to dispatch his fleet⁹⁰. Janrao Dhulap in his reply to the letter of the Peshwa disclosed that he had already sent Krishnarao Dhulap on 25th December with some vessels from the fleet to repulse the English assault and informed him that all precautionary measures had been adopted

by him to keep vigil over the manoeuvres of the Portuguese navy⁹¹. No wonder, the Portuguese had fitted out a fleet from Goa with the intention of regaining if possible any of their lost areas in the North. As a counter measure, Gangadhar Govind dispatched his fleet to chase these Portuguese ships⁹².

A report of 15th January 1775 from Govindrao reveals some controversy relating to some official papers of agreement about Salsete issued by Dada Saheb (Raghoba) at the instance of the British. It was taken amiss by the Portuguese and they lodged their protest to the Vakil of Raja of Sawantwadi, who promised them that he would prevail upon Dada Saheb to pass on those documents to them. Mostyn clarified later on to the Maratha Chief Anandrao Jivaji Khasgivale in March 1775 that the British forces were compelled to seize Salsete to keep off the Portuguese from its occupation and they had no other intention apart from this⁹³. However, the fact remains that the Portuguese were no more a strong naval power as their trading vessels were easily challenged now even by petty potentate. For instance, in 1773 when a Portuguese ship was bringing rice from Karnataka, it was captured by the Chief of Sawandwadi in Mormugão, in the vicinity of Goa port⁹⁴.

By now, the Marathas had not taken any chances and they were fully prepared for any eventuality. Since the Siddi used to disturb often the taluka of Avachitgad, they had already guarded well the forts of Sangiri and Paperi (1765-1766) to restrain and retaliate them. It may be

recalled here that in 1770 Madhav Rao Peshwa had issued orders to his officers in Ahmadabad to recruit the Arabs, Habshis and Siddis in the Maratha army⁹⁵. The practice of such a type of recruitment of the best soldiers even among the Europeans was continued for long and hence it was not a surprise that many French soldiers found their placements in the Maratha army. Rather the French were specially patronised by Nana Fadnavis and Mahadji Sindhia.

It may be stressed here that the Bombay government had ignored the Regulating Act passed by the British Parliament in 1773 at the instance of Lord North, Prime Minister of England in which the Presidencies of Madras and Bombay were subordinated to the province of Bengal, by concluding the treaty of Surat with Raghoba in March 1775. Under it, the British were to secure Peshwaship for rebel Raghoba and in return get back Bassein and Salsete, apart from the revenues of the Broach and Surat districts. Ultimately, the joint forces of Colonel Keating and Raghoba confronted the Peshwa's army on 18th May 1775 at Arras and the fight ensued. When the Supreme Council of Calcutta headed by the Governor-General Warren Hastings learnt about the action of the Bombay government, his rivals opposed it tooth and nail. Hastings had taken the lenient view of recognising the treaty of Surat. However, the majority opinion prevailed and the conduct of the Bombay Council was frowned upon as "impolitic, dangerous, unauthorised, and unjust". Consequently, on 31st May, Supreme Council ordered for the recall of Company's forces "unless their safety might be endangered by an instant retreat". A couple of months

later, it deputed Colonel Upton to Poona to hold parleys for peace with Poona Regency. The outcome of these talks was signing of the Treaty of Purandar on 1st March 1776. It nullified the Surat Treaty and endorsed the keeping of Salsete and collecting the revenues of Broach by the English. Further, the Poona Regency acquiesced to pay Rs.12 lakhs to the British towards the war expenses and in turn the British retracted the support to Raghoba who was left in the lurch to lead his life on a monthly pension of Rs.25,000 from the coffers of the Peshwa.⁹⁶.

Given the practical problems, the Portuguese could not act against the Marathas as by 1774 their naval fleet of Goa had dwindled to only 29 embarkations including warships, frigate, Pala, Machuwas, Curvets etc.⁹⁷. In the same year, five or six Portuguese trading vessels fitted out from Goa to Surat, and though they were escorted by a 64-gun warship, they were assaulted by the Maratha fleet. In the ensuing struggle, the warship slipped abandoning the vessels under its protection to the Marathas who took them away to Gheria. During the war against the British, the Maratha navy achieved pretty little, though the former were terribly scared for not having enough warships at their disposal in Bombay because most of them were engaged for defence at Basra and in the Persian Gulf. Yet, Admiral Anand Rao Dhulap seized the Ranger and towed it away to Gheria. He learnt later on that the peace treaty with the British had already been signed at Purandar⁹⁸.

Now the political tide in Calcutta had turned and the Court of Directors resolved to respect the Treaty of Surat

and Warren Hastings also gave his nod to the proposal. The immediate consequences of this resolve was the beginning of the Second Anglo-Maratha War. Surprisingly, Nana Fadnavis succeeded in convincing Haidar Ali to support him. The British forces which marched from Bombay unexpectedly had to face the humiliating defeat at the hands of the Marathas backed by Haider Ali. Consequently, the British were forced to surrender in 1779 under the Convention of Wargaon by which they agreed to hand over Raghoba, forsake all the regions captured since the beginning of the war and to pass over hostages for honouring the Convention. However, the Convention was not ratified by Warren Hastings. The British in the meanwhile had attracted the ire of the Indian powers to such an extent that they formed the confederation against them. All the Maratha Chiefs except Gaikwad, Haider Ali and the Nizam, joined it. But Hastings was unnerved because he had played his cards well. His armies had launched the offensive. Next year (1780), General Goddard took over Ahmedabad and Bassein. Major Pophan seized Gwalior in the north in the same year. The British forces now tried to aim at Poona but had to withdraw bearing a tremendous loss. Hastings then lured Bhonsle of Nagpur and signed a separate peace treaty with Mahadji Sindhia, well known as the Treaty of Salbai (near Gwalior) in 1782. However, Mahadji Sindhia had got this treaty duly signed by Nana Fadnavis. Under this understanding, it returned the areas west of the River Yamuna to Sindhia. The Company was to retain Salsete and the fort of Thana with it and both the parties were to exchange the newly acquired territories of each other. Raghoba was to be

granted a pension. This historic treaty has been recognised as an important milestone in Indian history. It was under this treaty the British made their presence felt everywhere in the country. By this treaty, they bought peace with the Marathas for another two decades. Haider Ali, though he was nowhere in the picture vis-a-vis the Treaty of Salbai, he was compelled indirectly to restore the acquired territory to the Nawab of Arcot⁹⁹.

It was but natural that Haider Ali was disturbed and he turned hostile towards the Marathas. The report sent by Govind Yeshwant and Janardhan Mahadev, emissaries of Marathas on 13th February 1781 to Nana Fadnavis reveals that the Maratha ships sent to Goa with the son of Narayan Vitthal Dhume, the Portuguese envoy, had faced certain difficulties. While returning from Goa the ships were chased by a flotilla of Haider Ali and some British ships also harassed them. When they sought shelter in the harbour of Goa, they were detained by the Portuguese and were restrained to leave the port unless a Portuguese vessel captured by the Marathas was released¹⁰⁰. It appears that the relations between Goa and Poona Darbar were not easy at this time. The Portuguese seized the Maratha fort of Sindhudurg in 1783. However, Janrao Dhulap forced them to raise the siege soon¹⁰¹. In the meanwhile, Tipu Sultan, valiant son of Haider Ali, had risen by this time to prominence by his courageous actions on the war front. On 16th December 1782, one big British fleet from Bombay was moving from the port of Tellicherry to Calicut to provide succour to the British against Tipu's huge army. On

capturing Calicut, the British troops sailed towards Karnataka and disembarking on the coastline on 19th December, conquered the territories of Mirgao, Honor, and Kundapur. On 28th January 1783, they captured Hyderabad, where they learnt that Haider Ali had already expired on 7th December 1782 in Arcot¹⁰².

On having a closer look at the affairs in Poona, it is observed that Nana Fadnavis had been striving hard still to occupy Janjira. When Lord Cornwallis took over the office of the Governor-General in India in 1786, the British representative Malet had put forth a proposal to hand over Janjira to the Peshwa provided they could possess Cuttack for the Company with the help of the Marathas. He was ready to give up even Surat besides Salsete for the sake of possessing Cuttack. But Lord Cornwallis felt that this offer of exchange was untenable because he valued Janjira the most. He reasoned that the Siddi's region in the vicinity of Bombay was the sole point from where the British fleet could get the cattles to supplement their requirement of beef. Bombay being encircled by Maratha territories it was virtually impossible for them to get even a single cow to Bombay through their possessions as it would hurt the religious feelings of the Marathas. The British moreover deemed the Siddi, with limited aid, a stronger force to take up cudgels against the Marathas than any big contingent from Bombay. They had fully realised the strategic and political significance of Janjira island both as a sort of buffer zone against the Marathas and as a centre to stock with provisions for Bombay in times of emergency. Their constant succour to

the Siddi for a long time proves that they had almost assumed the responsibility of protecting Janjira. Gradually, they assumed the new role as mediators and compelled the Marathas to put an end to all conflicts with the Siddis. In 1784, the British had deputed Nicholson to inspect Janjira with the motive to assist the Siddi in case the Marathas resumed their attacks. In his survey report, he described its condition thus: "The works in general are very good. Platforms are, however, much wanted as in several of the terraces the gun carriages stand on the rough masonry only; where there are platforms, they are made without any slope which is very inconvenient and causes a great deal of unnecessary labour. There were 71 guns in all (mostly old), the fort could be defended by 60 lascars and 400 Sipais (soldiers). Beside six 18 pounders, six 12 pounders and 8 inch mortar with plenty of ammunition and provisions". Moreover, Siddi Zumrud was in Madgarh (12 miles from Janjira) which had 20 guns and the fort of Cansa had 23 guns. When the Marathas threatened the Siddis, both Siddi Zumrud and Siddi Abdul Rahim asked for Company's support. In the beginning, the British did not show the desire to help them against the Marathas as they were aware that in the past the Siddi of Rajpuri had been indulging in aggressive activities several times. It may be recalled here that after the death of Siddi Rahim, Balloo Mian had run away to Poona as Siddi Johar (Rahim's son-in-law) had laid a claim on the regency. Balloo Mian sent his agent to Fort Victoria to convince the British that friendship with the Marathas was only a temporary phase to secure assistance for himself, Abdul Rahman and their

families. The Company at that time had specific instructions from London not to mediate between any Indian potentates. But Balloo Mian persisted to secure the British succour. He proposed to give to the British three districts on the river Bankot in exchange of the military help against Siddi Johar. The Company however was willing only to mediate. The worsening crisis had a break when Poona Government proposed in January 1786 that Balloo Mian should look after the administration of Janjira as a regent till his younger brother matured, and the command of the fleet should remain with Siddi Johar. These conditions were to be foisted on Siddi Johar through a joint letter signed by Bombay and Poona Governments. Siddi Johar did show willingness to accept Balloo Mian's younger brother for the regency but argued that Poona Government desired Siddi Zumrud as the regent while retaining Balloo Mian with them. This stance of Siddi Johar triggered a fresh crisis. The British resolved to preclude Poona to back Balloo Mian as such a support would harm their interests. The Siddis were no longer strong enough and any move to render them any help attracted the clause of the Treaty of Salbai by which neither party was to render any type of help to the foes of the other. Now, Malet had shown willingness to help the Siddi because the Marathas were desperate to occupy Janjira at any cost. Lord Cornwallis no doubt disliked the intentions of Nana Fadnavis, but he had realised that the friendship with Marathas was day by day becoming vital considering the imminent break in the relations with Tipu Sultan. Under these circumstances, the Marathas went ahead with the attack against the fort of

Madgarh by surprise in May 1789 but faced the rout at the hands of the Siddi. The British wanted to stick to the Treaty of 1761 vis-a-vis their relations with the Siddis, but the circumstances changed with the death of Siddi Johar in March 1790 and Janjira was hurriedly occupied by Siddi Ibrahim Yakut Khan, its former Governor. Now, as Lord Cornwallis was anxious to subdue Tipu Sultan, he turned towards Peshwa for his cooperation but Poona laid claim on Janjira. Lord Cornwallis tacitly agreed to honour the claim of the Marathas but on a condition. If in case Balloo Mian succeeded in occupying the Janjira Masnad prior to its possession taken by the Peshwa, he was not to be ousted from there by the Marathas¹⁰³.

But the Poona Government was not agreeable to this strange conditional offer of the British. Surprisingly, when the negotiations were going on, suddenly the British declared Janjira to be a state under the Company's protection¹⁰⁴. In October, Nana again broached the issue and urged upon the British to remove the undesirable restriction in respect of occupation of Janjira. Malet responded that he would impress upon Balloo Mian to change his uncertain claim and stand on Janjira in exchange of an immediate provision¹⁰⁵. In January 1791, Nana raised the issue once again but the parleys were put off till the war with Tipu Sultan ended. However, the war against Tipu Sultan prolonged leading to an agreement between the Company and the Peshwa on 6th June 1791, which set at rest the entire issue. Balloo Mian and his younger brother, in exchange of a gift to them of Sachin, area in the vicinity of Surat, fetching yearly earnings of Rs.75,000/-

besides Rs.40,000/- in cash gave up all their claims and the right to possess the princely state of Janjira. Balloo Mian also consented to have peaceful and cordial ties with the Company and the Peshwa¹⁰⁶.

It is worth noting that much before the British launched an assault against Tipu Sultan, the Marathas had proposed in 1787 an alliance with the Portuguese soliciting their co-operation in naval warfare against Tipu's fleet. Accordingly, the Portuguese Governor was requested by Vithal Rao Goraksh Valatlikar, Portuguese envoy at Poona that since Pant Pradhan had ordered Gangadhar Govinda to proceed with his fleet to conquer Tipu's territories, necessary order be issued for providing him or any other person on his behalf firewood or any other provisions on payment in Goa¹⁰⁷. In January 1791, the naval forces of Maratha Subedar of Vijaydurg, Baburao Salokhe encircled Sadashivgad. His fleet later on was joined by the army of Sakhopant Ramchandra, Subedar of Kalanidhi, and the combine together captured the fort of Ximpi (Kurmagad) on 24th January¹⁰⁸.

The war against Tipu Sultan lasted for two years, whose officers in the fort of Sadashivgad and Piro, Kalbe Khan and Kedar Khan made it clear to the Portuguese in January 1791 that though the British had encircled Tipu's forces with a contingent of 60,000 strong men, Tipu had a force of more than 1,00,000 soldiers garrisoned at Sati Mangal Ghat in two divisions. They informed that as per the reports, there had been skirmishes between the two forces and every time Tipu's men achieved success. They also added that

it was quite difficult for the British to climb the mountainous area and fight against Tipu¹⁰⁹. However, in March 1791, Tipu could not embarrass the British forces led by General Medows and Colonel Marshal. He tried the diversion, which forced General Medows to come down to the Ghats protecting the British establishments and their allies (Marathas and the Nizam) as Lord Cornwallis could not have defended the same with the small force at his disposal. Lord Cornwallis then marched to Vellore with the larger part of the army, leaving rest of the forces with General Medows. He crossed the Ghats and conquered Bangalore on 19th-21st March 1791. The British also planned an attack on (Seringapatam) Srirangapatam but their bulky artillery was yet to pass the Ghats. However, Dharwar was captured by the combined army commanded by Parshuram Bhau, while the Nizam entered Cudapur and joined Lord Cornwallis with a force of 16,000 men¹¹⁰.

The last achievement of the Maratha navy was the capture of Ximpi (Kurmagad) in 1791. The Maratha fleet devastated the coast from Ankola to Barcelore (Basrur) and then retired towards Honavar on 15th April. As Ximpi was safe and secure by natural surroundings and was deemed almost impregnable, the Portuguese were greatly impressed at its speedy acquisition by the Maratha fleet. One part of the Maratha fleet departed from Honavar for the north, while the rest lied in wait at the port with the intention to capture Tipu's ships. The Portuguese were to conquer the fort of Piro on their own, but on behalf of Sunda King, their protégé, as per the tacit understanding. Finally, they did

capture the fort on the 30th January 1791. However, after concluding a humiliating treaty with the British, Tipu asked for its restoration from the Portuguese, who considered Haider and Tipu as their arch enemies and gleefully watched the latter's gradual degradation by the British and the Marathas. Tipu was compelled to pay 300 lakhs of Cruzados and half of his dominions to the British, apart from his two sons as hostages. Under these circumstances, the Portuguese were unwilling to restore the fort of Piro to Tipu as that would have been disgraceful in the eyes of other Indian powers, wrote the Portuguese Secretary of State from Queluz Palace, Lisbon in August 1793¹¹¹.

The Portuguese were very unhappy with Tipu as ever since he became the master of Karnataka, their State was subjected to famine conditions on account of the closure of his ports for the Portuguese vessels. They could not procure rice without bribing or presenting gifts to his officers in charge of the forts and commanders of his fleets. In fact, the British war against Tipu had caused a dismal situation for the Portuguese as Goa fell short of 1,00,000 bags of rice. The year 1789 specially created famine like situation there, as the harvest in Daman too was not good¹¹².

The fort of Sadashivgad which was lying in Sunda Kingdom had been snatched by Haider Ali from the Portuguese. But the Portuguese had retrieved it from Tipu in 1791 taking advantage of the departure of the Peshwa's force led by Baburao Salokhe and Sakho Pant Ramchandra towards Karnataka. The Poona court, on learning about it immediately wrote to

the Portuguese Government to vacate the fort for the Marathas¹¹³.

Later, Xec (Shaikh) Ismail, a lieutenant of Tipu wrote to Colonel Manoel Antonio Diniz de Ayala, Commandant of Piro on 14th May 1792 that in conformity with the orders of his master (Tipu), he had entered the places like Kushalpur, Cundapur etc. upto Sadashigad and Piro and assisted the Portuguese in punishing the robbers, ensuring the security of life to the people and maintaining peace and order into the region before reaching back to Ankola¹¹⁴.

In the meanwhile, the Marathas also made great strides in the northern part of India. By 1792, Mahadji Sindhia had turned to be the most leading Maratha Sardar of the times. He had recruited in his army numerous Rajputs, Muslims and the French. He had his military set-up on the lines of European armies. He had engaged for this task Benoit de Boigne, the French military expert, and other Europeans well-versed in military strategies. The Mughal King, Shah Alam II was greatly influenced by him and thus had extracted from him the coveted post of Wakil-i-Mutluq for the Peshwa. He managed to be the representative of the Peshwa, secured the command of imperial army and also wielded tremendous influence over the Rajputs and the Jats. In 1792, he came down to Poona to pay his respects to the youthful Peshwa Madhav Rao but the true motive behind the visit was to impress upon the Poona Court of his importance. Taking advantage of his visit, another Maratha Sardar, Holkar, raised the banner of revolt in the North but had to face the

humiliating defeat at the hands of the skillful army of Sindhia at Ajmer led by Boigne. With the death of Sindhia in 1794, the British in the North heaved a sigh of relief. Earlier, Nana was successful in annexing from Tipu, Badami, Kittur and Nargund besides payment of Rs.45 lakhs. The Nizam, a long time rival and foe of the Marathas, backed the British against Tipu. Under these circumstances, the young Peshwa Madhavrao II has been feeling let down by Nana Fadnavis who had now more clout than himself in the Poona Court. Day by day he could not withstand his interference and arbitrary actions. Ultimately, unable to bear it any longer, he committed suicide in October 1795. He was succeeded by Raghoba's son, Baji Rao II, an arch enemy of Nana. His ascendance to the Peshwaship gave rise to politics of conspiracies¹¹⁵.

The position of the Portuguese was worse. In May 1792, the Portuguese had to face the problem of returning the fort of Piro to Tipu as they could no longer repulse him. Accordingly, they strived for a firm treaty of friendship with him in order to secure free access to them for trading in his ports to obtain provisions of rice. Though they did not consider it appropriate to hand over the fort of Piro without holding any negotiation, they felt it unavoidable as that would have invited a violent war with Tipu. In fact they were surrounded by unfaithful friends. Bhonsle of Sawantwadi for instance had already joined hands with other Desais to retrieve Pernem, Bicholim and Sanguem. The Marathas had launched an assault against the fort of Piro and the Portuguese were not strong enough to defend themselves

against the powerful Tipu. Consequently, they promised to return the fort of Piro and province of Sivansar and Cadrem expecting the supply of rice and establishment of a factory in the port of Mangalore or any other site in the south. Though Tipu had been defeated by the joint forces of the British and the Marathas, the latter too suffered heavy losses in men and animals. Interestingly, Tipu had managed the support of the confidante of Peshwa, Hari Pant Phadke by promising him a high position in his government. This is discernible from Hari Pant's efforts he made in Poona Court, that favoured Tipu against the British¹¹⁶.

At this time, the affairs in Janjira however were rather peaceful as there was no serious trouble with the Marathas. Siddi Johar administered Janjira for six years from 1784-1789 and was succeeded by Siddi Ibrahim alias Dhakle Baba. He ruled till 1792 when his slave Siddi Zumrud Khan usurped power by putting him into the prison where he remained till Zumrud's death in 1804. Thereafter, Ibrahim again assumed the Nawabship of Janjira and for nearly 22 years remained in power till his death in 1826. He was known for his suave conduct, kindness and cordiality towards aliens¹¹⁷.

While Balloo Mian took possession of his new state of Sachin as per the agreement, the Peshwa immediately laid claim on Janjira. But the Siddi refused to hand it over. Therefore, Poona Court made a last bid and to oust him from there sought Portuguese help for this in August 1792¹¹⁸. The attempt, however, failed and Janjira remained with the

Siddis. It is rather surprising to note that when the British support to take Janjira was available, what made Poona Court to approach the Portuguese for this task is not known. Were the Marathas not powerful enough to occupy the fort on their own? The only cogent answer lies in the fact that Janjira being impregnable on account of its natural surroundings, it could be conquered only with the help of a very powerful navy and since the Maratha navy would have made no impact against the solid rocks of Janjira and its gunfire, the Marathas were compelled to approach the Portuguese for the purpose.

It may be remarked that the Marathas had gained Tipu's possessions and the Nizam too got his share. However, after the war, the British Governor John Shore adopted a policy of non-intervention in the princely affairs in India. The Marathas took advantage of this and in March 1795, they inflicted defeat on the Nizam at Kharda near Ahmadnagar. Since the British did not come to his rescue, he had to part with the regions and money to the Marathas. Being perturbed over the new British stance, he began enlisting French soldiers in his army under Raymond, the French expert in military affairs. He soon retrieved the areas he had to give up to the Marathas in the wake of his defeat at Kharda. The Marathas too had engaged several French military personnel in their army. Tipu on the other hand had deputed his agent to Arabia, Kabul, Constantinopole, Versailles and Mauritius to gauge the possibility of help for him. Napolean had sent an expedition into Egypt with a view to shake the British position in India. He wrote to Tipu: "You have been already

informed of my arrival on the shores of the Red Sea with an innumerable and invincible army, full of the desire of releasing you from the iron Yoke of the English¹¹⁹.

In this predicament, Marques Wellesley took over his office at this time to guide the destiny of Company in India.

The Portuguese had no reasons to be on friendly terms with Tipu Sultan as they could not get much needed rice from his ports. Tipu had already improved his resource position to a great extent and he welcomed in 1798, the French force in his region. Daulat Rao Sindhia had started wielding such a tremendous influence which could not be ignored. The Nizam on the other hand went on the side of the British against Tipu and at once signed the treaty of a subsidiary alliance with them on 1st September 1798. The Marathas were not willing to join them though they were invited by the British several times. However, when Wellesly assured the share of the conquests in the aftermath of the war, the Marathas finally agreed to join them. Sensing the great offensive, Tipu prepared himself to face the onslaught at Srirangapatam with his 40,000-strong force. In the meanwhile, the British army from Bombay under Stuart defeated Tipu's forces on 5th March 1799 at Sedaseer, 45 miles west of Srirangapatam and the contingents of Bengal and Madras led by Harris inflicted defeat on him at Malvelly, 30 miles east of Tipu's capital¹²⁰.

England and Portugal were attached to each other by their age-old treaty of alliance. Therefore, the Portuguese whole-heartedly supported British who were fighting against

the support of Napoleon Bonaparte. The British forces occupied Goa on 6th September 1799 as a precautionary measure and remained there till the danger of Napoleons invasion in India was over. As early as 30th January 1798, Tipu's dispatches revealed the plan of treaty with Isle of France and Gen. Malatric had reached there for adjustment of the stipulations and goals of complicity of the army of thousands of Europeans, French and 30,000 Africans with 60,000 Mysoreans at a specified spot to take Goa from the Portuguese¹²¹. According to the plan, after the war, Goa and other Portuguese possessions were to go to Tipu and Bombay to the French. Tipu also wanted to seize Madras, oust the Marathas, Nizam Ali and finally capture Bengal¹²².

It may be interesting to note that the trouble was brewing in the Maratha camp. Daulat Rao Sindhia was not happy with the authority in Poona and he wrote to the Portuguese Governor-General, Francisco da Veiga Cabral in January 1798 that Vasudev Rao Govind and Moro Baburao Belkar who had been deputed by Nana Fadnavis to Goa in order to purchase gunpowder, cannon balls etc., might be detained there till he received fresh orders from himself¹²³. The Portuguese had their own interest in mind and they still desired to gain back the fort of Piro. As their eyes were constantly set on it, the Portuguese Governor-General watched the British advance against Tipu and wrote to the Sargeant Major of Canacona province to report him about the British movements against the fortress as soon as possible¹²⁴. The Governor-General had been advised by the Crown that the whole

issue vis-a-vis Tipu was to be discussed and thrashed out through the correspondence at the levels of the Ministries of the Courts of Lisbon and London¹²⁵. Ultimately, Tipu was defeated soon in this war and the British finally crushed him on the 5th May 1799 and heaved a sigh of great relief¹²⁶.

Soon thereafter, in 1800 Nana Fadnavis too died and with his death all the qualities of the diplomatic acumen, wisdom and sobriety in the Maratha administration disappeared with him. Daulat Rao Sindhia and Jaswant Rao Holkar were at loggerheads for ascendancy at Poona, and on account of the indecisive Peshwa, a weakling, worsened the situation at the Poona Court. Initially, Sindhia predominated. But when his forces clashed against Holkar's at Malwa, the Peshwa arranged for the elimination of Vithuji Holkar, brother of Jasvant Rao. This deed infuriated Jasvant Rao Holkar and he therefore launched a fierce attack against the Peshwa at Poona and vanquished the joint forces of the Peshwa and the Sindhia on 23rd October 1800. This forced the Peshwa to run from pillar to the post for safety. While he took shelter in Bassein, Holkar manoeuvred Vinayak Rao, son of Amrita Rao (Raghoba's adopted son) on the throne¹²⁷. This discord further enfeebled the authority of the Marathas and in 1801 their vast kingdom was in serious crisis on account of the growing mistrust of the main generals among themselves and the ruler's distrust towards all of them. And the Peshwa was not in a position to resolve the crisis owing to the dearth of talents¹²⁸.

On top of that, there were large disturbances caused

by Holkar. In the summer of 1802, a part of his army led by his son Balarao set afire various villages falling under Baroda State. Consequently, many villagers ran away and some having seen the fate of the people in the neighbourhood belonging to the Poona Court, sought shelter in the Portuguese fort of Daman to avoid any violent repercussions¹²⁹.

Contrary to expectations, the British possessions had risen manifold in the South in the aftermath of defeat and the death of Tipu Sultan. They had also made significant strides in the North. In 1802-1803, the British had in Madras, Bengal, Bombay and Surat 17 Regiments of the European infantry (20,400 men), 3 Regiments of the European troops (6,000 men), 5 Regiments of the King (2,500 men), 13 Regiments of the Native cavalry (6,500), 7 Battalions of the European artillery (4,900), 43 Regiment of the native troops (103200), 3 battalions of Pioneers, Lascars for the services of the army (10,000), apart from 20,000 men posted to garrison the forts, barracks and artillery¹³⁰.

Baji Rao II who had declined earlier the British offer to opt for the subsidiary alliance with them now felt vulnerable and sought the British protection. And that is exactly what Wellesly had desired as it fitted well in his plan of future actions to checkmate the Marathas. The Peshwa had no other option than to give consent to accept the subsidiary alliance and he signed it in December 1802. The British on noticing that the father of the usurper, Amrit Rao had secured the royal seal and the retinue from the King of Satara, who then lived a life of a prisoner in the Satara

fort and could never step out as per the stipulations of the Convention held in 1749 between Shahu and other Maratha chieftains, resolved to protect Baji Rao II. The treaty included the clause of withdrawal from all the Maratha ports on the Malabar coast, the payment and maintenance of 6,000 British troops to guard the ruler at Poona and a large amount as annual tribute. Baji Rao II first moved to Bassein from Poona under the guard of 1,000 British troops and then to Bombay. And in implementation of it, armed forces under Lt. General Stuart then marched from Srirangpatnam to Poona¹³¹.

It was under these circumstances that the Peshwa Bajirao II was rehabilitated on Poona's seat of power on 13th May 1803. The treaty no doubt had hurt the feelings of the Maratha chieftains as it had been signed with the Peshwa, now almost a non-entity in their eyes. Even the Peshwa himself felt the humiliation as is evident from his secret but reassuring messages dispatched to Bhonsle and Sindhia. Daulat Rao Sindhia and Raghuj Bhonsle II of Berar at once came together, but even then Jaswant Rao Holkar maintained a distance despite being invited. Gaikwad opted to be neutral. But the climate of hatred prevailed soon as the British were preparing to attack them on all sides. General Lake marched in Gujarat, Bundelkhand, Orissa and the north, while Arthur Wellesley headed towards Deccan. Many European officers of Sindhia's army had left his services and the Marathas had also refrained from indulging in the old guerilla tactics. Consequently, they had to bear heavy losses. Wellesley seized Ahmadnagar in August, and in the following month subdued the armies of Sindhia and Bhonsle at Assaye, near

Aurangabad. Burhanpur and Asirgarh soon fell into the hand of the British. Raghaji's force surrendered at Argaon in November, and in December there was the fall of Gwalior. On the other hand, Lake occupied Delhi and Agra and annexed Gujarat, Bundelkhand and Orissa. But in this wide scale exercise of success, the British lost many well-known soldiers at the hands of the disciplined Maratha soldiers who had followed the tactics of many Portuguese, British, Italians and the French Officers who were in the service of the Maratha armies. Yet, the British benefitted greatly as they got 500 pieces of guns, large cannons and 25,000 natives and 200 Europeans as prisoners¹³².

The British signed the treaty of Deogaon with Raghaji and treaty of Surji - Arjangaon with the Sindhia. They thus got Cuttack including Balasore and the whole region on the western side of the river Wardha. From Sindhia, they acquired the country between Yamuna and Ganga, his fortifications and areas to the north of Jaipur, Ahmadnagar, Broach and the areas west of the Ajanta Hills. Sindhia also gave up all his claims on the territories of the Mughal King, the Peshwa and the Nizam, and consented to allow the British Resident at his court promising to drive out all other Europeans from there. In 1804, he also signed the subsidiary alliance with them. Holkar however defeated Colonel Monson near Kota in April 1804. He forged ahead and besieged Delhi in October but did not succeed to annex it. In the following month, however he had to face defeats. The next year, the British were defeated at Bharatpur. In July, Cornwallis was appointed the Governor-General second time but he expired in October at

Gazipur. Holkar had relied much on the help of the Sikhs but when he realised that it was not forthcoming, he had to abandon the war plans in 1806¹³³.

Thus, the British took control of vast lands of Tipu and the Maratha chieftains. They had already stationed their forces in Portuguese possessions of Goa and Daman till 1813, much after the times when the threat by Napoleen the Great to India faded. Goa had acute shortage of rice, that was the only bread for thousands of residents. Since the British had now to sustain a vast army, they too had banned the export of rice from Canara ports. The Portuguese Governor Francisco Antonio da Veiga Cabral therefore approached the British authority of Madras and Bombay through Sir William Clarke, Commander of the British troops stationed then in Goa, for procuring rice and somehow managed 32,000 packs of rice from Bombay in time¹³⁴.

In the meantime, curiously, the affairs in Janjira continued to be peaceful and after the death of Siddi Zumrud in 1804, his successor Siddi Ibrahim ruled over the principality till 1826. Though he was known for his sobriety, tolerance and sociality, still the complaints were received against him in 1809. The Siddi's soldiers had encircled the houses in the village of Serodun in order to force them to give their daughters in marriage against their will. The Muslims of the area as well as those staying in Bombay represented to the Governor of Bombay about this sordid episode and hitherto unheard of tyrannical action. The Governor therefore had to warn the Siddi that this being

the case of a violence against decency of manner and tenets of religion, he should refrain from using force for such marriages as his (the Siddi's) religion also dictated so¹³⁵.

Obviously, the Siddi was indulging in pleasures and this was for the first time that his own subjects came to know about his true character. They had never heard such things earlier because formerly the Siddi used to commit such acts on Maratha territories, which had gone to the British later on.

The British had no real danger from any quarter now after defeating Tipu Sultan and the powerful Maratha chieftains. Besides acquiring new vast territories in north and south India, they established their control over Tanjore and Surat in 1799 because there was none to succeed at both the places. It may be recalled that since 1759, the British had taken upon themselves the protection of Surat on behalf of the Mughal Emperor. The civil administration was retained with its Nawab, who could not finance the company for the required expenses of the garrison it maintained there. The old Nawab, Mir Nazamaldin Khan Kaim-ud-Daula had died in January 1799. Since his son was a minor, the brother of the late Nawab assumed the charge of the civil administration and was hopefully looking forward to the decree of the Mughal Emperor for the confirmation of his Nawabship which required the due approval of the British as they possessed the castle.

They not only did not recognise him as the Nawab but also pointed fingers at him for the death of the minor son of the late Nawab. Therefore, General Wellesley compelled him to

surrender the entire administration of Surat to the Company in March 1800 and thus established British supremacy over there¹³⁶.

However, not a single Maratha chief including the Peshwa enthused over the new status the British had acquired in India, and they were restive to retrieve the loss they had suffered. Unfortunately, Yeshvant Rao Holkar's brother, Vithoji Holkar was trampled to death by the elephant at Baji Rao's instance. But Holkar got so much enraged that he defeated the Peshwa in Poona and compelled him to run away to Bassein on 25th October 1802. The course of events so affected the mind of Yeshvant Rao Holkar that he turned insane, and died in October 1811. The territory of Bhonsle now was subjected to the raids of the Pindaris and the Pathans who had gathered under the powerful Pathan chief, Amirkhan, who had the force of 40,000 horsemen besides 20,000 Pindaris. Since the British were not concerned with the protection of Bhonsle's region because he had declined to opt for the subsidiary alliance, Amirkhan seized the opportunity to invade Berar in 1809 and pillaged it. He was on rampage to such an extent that Lord Minto had to step in and consequently Amirkhan was chased out from Berar by the British forces. However, later in 1817, he got due recognition from the British and Holkar as Nawab of Tonk. In the intervening period, the Peshwa under the pressure from Trimbakji Dengle, his favourite Minister was still pinning hope for the Maratha unity and hence he involved himself in intrigues with the intention of leading once more confederacy of the Maratha chieftains against the British but Gaikwad had

cold feet.' When Gaikwad deputed his Chief Minister, Gangadhar Shastri to Poona in 1814 to discuss some pending issue, Shastri who was friendly with the British was taken away to Pandharpur by the Peshwa, where he was annihilated at the instance of Trimbakji on 20th July 1815. Trimbakji was taken into custody by the British with great efforts, and was imprisoned ultimately in the fort of Thana¹³⁷.

So, by now the Indian princes' resistance to the British had become so feeble that Lord Hastings on his arrival in 1813 had only to claim that the British power was the paramount power in India. As it was in the case of some Marathas, units of Tipu's army also rebelled against the British. At the time of Tipu's defeat and death at Srirangapatam in 1799, the British found in the prison there Dhondoji Wagh from Kolhapur, who was released by Major General Baird. But subsequently, he mustered enough courage to retaliate against the British to avenge the death of Tipu Sultan. He drew on his side all the dispersed troops of the departed ruler numbering over 60,000 and began pillaging the areas of Mysore and even confronted the British at Srirangapatam. As a result, Major General Wellesley had to call for reinforcements in 1804 to defeat him¹³⁸.

The British by now had recruited more corps of native soldiers but they were under European officers. But at Vellore, where they had imprisoned Tipu's sons, the trouble was brewing among the disbanded soldiers of Tipu, who were forced to change their habits, costumes and traditions. The

garrison of the fort there was under the command of the British officers and there were two native regiments which earlier belonged to Tipu's forces. In early 1807, these two native regiments taking advantage of the absence of the overbearing British Colonel in charge of the fort rebelled and put to death all the British officers, hoisted Tipu's flag and reassembled under Tipu's sons. Later, the Colonel retaliated vehemently, shot dead all the rebel troops, took into custody Tipu's sons and sent them immediately to Bengal.

The British later on were very cautious in maintaining the native soldiers and that too in those areas which were under their firm control¹³⁹.

Thus, the British succeeded to a great extent and consolidated their position in India. After the second war with the Marathas, there was no serious challenge to their power in India, and they easily defused the crises, not of serious nature. In the third Maratha war, they had no difficulty in crushing easily the last resistance posed by the beleaguered Peshwa in 1817.

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CHAPTER VII

LATER SIDDIS (1813-1947)

At this juncture in our chronology, it is important to emphasise that in the first decade of the 19th century, the British waged a violent war against the powerful Maratha chieftains for supremacy in India. And all of them were vanquished in one way or the other and thus the British thereafter faced no serious threat to their authority in India. In the next decade, they tried to consolidate further their hold by bringing the administrations of several big and small principalities under their direct and indirect control. As a result, all the Indian princes had the titles only for the name sake and the real power was vested with the British. The Mughal king had already sought their protection and had lost the moral authority to rule. The Peshwa too wielded no more the old power and authority and was feeling increasingly uncomfortable in the wake of rising influence of the British everywhere. But being still proud of the glorious past of his people, he ventured to make the final attempt to regain the eminent position by leading the confederacy second time.

Trimbakji Dengle who was imprisoned at Thana fort, escaped on 12th September 1816. Though there is no tangible proof to detect the involvement of the Peshwa behind his escapade, the circumstances leading to it show that he could not slip without the active support and exertion of the Peshwa. The matters took a different turn in February 1817 when the British learnt about Trimbakji's serious efforts from Nasik aimed against their authority in the form of insurrection with the tacit and clandestine help from the

Peshwa. Now the Peshwa had already started the dialogue with the subdued Maratha chiefs and had contacted Amirkhan, the Pathan chief and the Pindaris. He put his heart in military manoeuvres and tried to pep up his army and its efficiency. The new Governor-General Hastings (1813-1823) warned him that his jurisdiction was confined to his independent possessions and he no longer held authority over the erstwhile feudatory Maratha States and that he was not inclined to restore them to him. He therefore did not hesitate to take quick steps against the Peshwa and compelled him to sign the treaty of Poona on 13th June 1817. The Peshwa renounced the headship of the Maratha confederacy and abandoned his claims on the Gaikwad and over the regions beyond the Narmada apart from handing over to the British some vital forts in Konkan. Upon the death of Raghaji Bhonsle in March 1816, the British had accepted the claim of Appa Saheb against Parsoji, Raghaji's son after the former had signed the subsidiary alliance on 27th March 1816. The circumstances were such that none of the Maratha chiefs could be placated on the forfeiture of their independence. The Peshwa adopted a very recalcitrant attitude from the day the Sindhia signed the treaty. He pillaged and set afire the British Residency at Poona. He clashed with Colonel Burr's army at Khirki, but was totally routed. Appa Saheb of Nagpur and Malhar Rao Holkar II, on the other hand also raised the banner of belligerency. Holkar was vanquished at Mahidpur in December 1817, but Appa Saheb though ultimately yielded, resisted vehemently at Nagpur causing a great loss to the British. The Peshwa clashed with British forces at two more places, one at Koregaon in January

and the other at Ashti in February 1818. However, he was totally humbled in both the battles losing his hold forever. However, he was granted by the British an annual pension of Rs. eight lakhs to spend the evening of his life at Bithur. Holkar too signed the treaty of Mandasore under which he had to abandon his title on the Rajput States, surrendered all the regions south of River Narmada to the British and acknowledged Amirkhan as Nawab of Tonk¹.

Contrary to expectations, after the death of Baji Rao I in 1740, the immense worth of Rajput states could not be recognised by his successors. Hastings gauged their unusual significance and by 1823, he managed to see that all the major states signed the defensive tie-ups with the British. In the meanwhile, the Chief of Janjira used to be one of their oldest allies and now the present Siddi was mutely delighted in his hard won Nawabship. He pressed now for the exemption from the payment of customs with regard to the imports in his region. The Bombay Government however did not budge though the Siddi tried to be in touch with them on the issue for two years (1814-1816) in vain. He put forth several arguments touching on the practices in the past justifying his case but the Company stuck to its stand of not conceding any concessions².

In 1818, coinciding with the surrender of the Peshwa, Bajirao II, it is observed that Janjira was not free from the freebooters and in September a group of 500-strong Arabs, Marathas and Pathans was assaulted at Paladpur near Mahad by a force led by Lt. Crosby. Consequently, most of the strong-

holds on the Konkan coast were abandoned³. It may be recalled that during the Nawabship of Siddi Ibrahim 1803-1817, the control of the Konkan moved hands from the Peshwa to the British who refrained from meddling in the administration of Janjira. But the Siddi had never forgiven the Marathas. He continued to tyrannize them. On hearing the defeat of the Peshwa, he wrote gleefully to the Right Hon'ble Sir Evan Nepean Bart, Governor of Bombay on 7th December 1817, expressing his happiness over the defeat of the Peshwa and congratulated his soldiers for the victory. And in response to the Governor's reply requesting him not to harm the subjects of the Poona State, he clarified that since he took over the Nawabship of Janjira 14 years ago, he had not allowed any harassment of his subjects. He also disclosed that the Peshwa owed him Rs.42,000 per annum under the treaty signed by him and not a single Rupee had been paid by him till his defeat⁴.

Two years later, in 1819, the entire administration of the district went into the hands of the British and they appointed a Resident at Malvan. The district, the Residency area was reorganised forming South Konkan Collectorate with Bankot as its headquarters. The following year, the Collectorate was transferred to Ratnagiri. And a decade later in 1830, the three sub-divisions north of the Bankot creek were shifted to the north Konkan and Ratnagiri was scaled down to the position of a sub-collectorate of five sub-divisions --- Suvarndurg including the sub-divisions of Dapoli and Khed, Anjanvel including Chiplun or Sangameshwar, Ratnagiri, Vijaydurg including Rajapur and Devgarh, and

Malvan. In 1868, the entire district was reorganised into eight sub-divisions and four small divisions. The sub-division included Dapoli, Chiplun, Guhagar, Sangameshwar, Ratnagiri, Rajapur, Devgad and Malvan. The small divisions were Mandangad, Khed, Lange and Vengurla⁵.

When the Siddi's regions went into the hands of the British in 1819, Anjanvel had the reputation as the most flourishing centre among all the places in South Konkan. The immediate consequences of the British rule was that the collection of the revenue was made with ease and promptness. The military personnel were done away with⁶. In 1826, Siddi Muhammad succeeded the Masnad of Janjira. In 1834, Janjira was subjugated by the British. In the same year, the British soon ordered the closure of the mint of Nawab, which used to issue silver and copper coins. The Nawab's rupee was very popular as Habshani. A letter dated 31st March 1834 from the Collector of Thana discloses that the Siddi was arranging for — minting the coins in his fort by one Dado Shete Reodundakur for a month. The Collector had himself collected 4 Rupees having a mark on the side and had observed that one Rupee was exchanged then for 107 or 100 Chinchoree Rupees. These Rupees were put into circulation in his territories and were used for his own expenses⁷.

Prior to this coin, another copper coin Paisa used to be issued by Siddi Ibrahim Khan II who had the sway over Janjira for a long time during 1789-92 and 1804-1826. His successor Siddi Muhammed Khan also issued a copper Paisa

(1826-1848), but the copper coin issued by Siddi Ibrahim Khan III (1848-1879) was really fine and bears the date on the obverse⁸.

It is of great significance that the moment the British established their hold in Janjira, the Siddi Chief was in for trouble on several occasions. For instance, on 28th November 1834, he requested the Governor of Bombay seeking immunity from payment of duties on certain items which he had ordered from the port of Surat. The British Consul asked him to be careful in maintaining the rapport with them and informed him that his request could not be conceded to. Another letter of Siddi reveals that he used to place order for the cloth pieces from Ghats regularly and after every 3 or 4 years from Surat costing about Rs.5,000/- . In 1838, he deputed his men to Surat to buy clothings for himself and for this reason, invoking the existing friendship he had sought the exemption from the payment of duties⁹.

Apart from such a discord on minor issues, the Siddi wielded his power on his own in all the internal affairs. This is discernible from the complaint lodged by one Bhiv Rao Damodar to the British authority in Bombay that his brother Seetaram had been killed on the Siddi's order by blowing him from a gun. Since the deceased was annihilated within his territory for an alleged crime of treachery, the British expressed their inability to interfere in the matter¹⁰.

Incidentally, there were bickerings between the Siddi of Janjira and the Nawab of Junagadh over the relations

between the Nawab of Jafarabad and Junagad. The gulf of differences between the two took such a turn that ultimately the matter was put up before the Governor of Bombay in 1836 and the decision given by him was accepted by both the parties¹¹. It may be recalled that the relations between the Siddi of Janjira and the Nawab of Jafarabad existed since 1759 when the Siddi had to give up Surat to the British. In 1731, one Turk Patel and some Koli landlords from Jafarabad had indulged in a piratical action near Surat. They were caught by Siddi Hilal who was then supervising the movements of the ships at Surat. Since they had nothing to pay as ransom, they offered their landholdings in Jafarabad to the Siddi. Siddi Hilal himself proceeded to Jafarabad and took possession of the land spreading over a village by a written deed. In 1749, the fortification was raised there and an agent and captain appointed. In 1759, some dispute arose at Jafarabad involving Siddi. The British intervened because they were interested in maintaining good rapport with the Siddi and in order to compensate him for the loss of Surat Castle, they took the decision to nominate Siddi Hilal as the Fauzdar of Jafarabad under the orders of the Siddi of Janjira. Siddi Hilal in response agreed to provide them the live cattles for beef, the vital food item for the British, which they were in need very much because the ousting of the Portuguese and the entrenchment of the Maratha power in the neighbourhood of Bombay had prevented them from procuring much desired beef¹².

There was another powerful branch of the Siddis of Janjira at a place called Alambaram in Saoraspatam on the

coast of Karnataka. Around 1700 A.D. Siddi Johar Khan, an army officer in the services of Siddi of Janjira secured the grant of Alambaram for him. He was an able officer and had cherished the ambition of developing the region to prosperity. With this aim in mind, he adopted certain radical fiscal measures there in 1728. He did away with all customs duties on imports and exports for five years. Also, he had given up all inland transport duties from Alambaram to Arcot. He gave a lot of encouragement to the Pathan traders from São Tomé de Meliapor to import and export from Alambaram. Perhaps this might be the reason for subsequent marital relationship of the Siddis with Pathans. Though, it is not known when a mint was opened at Alambaram, there are evidences to show that Alambaram Pagodes were in circulation in the interior in 1730s and they were widely in use by the trading community right upto Madras¹³.

Yet another small principality having connections with the Siddis of Janjira was that of Sachin, near Surat. Its chiefs had marital ties with the Arabs and the Pathans of north-west Pakistan and hence their progeny had Caucasian features. The poor among them however, married among themselves thereby retaining negroid features. In the 42-sq. miles principality of Sachin, there was a Political Agent in the beginning and the State used to be under the control of Bombay Presidency. Its 21 villages were scattered and some of them were surrounded by the British territory, and some by the areas of the Baroda State. At the beginning of this century, it had the population of 20,530 including Hindus

(17581), Muslims (264) and Parsis (238). Apart from the common cereals, it produced cotton and sugarcane¹⁴. In contrast, the State of Janjira a century ago had a Muslim population of 13912 or 18.2% as per the Census of 1881. They were scattered in Janjira, Mhasla, Murud and Shrivardhan. They were Konkanis (12429), Daldis (1225), Habshis or Siddis (258) and a few families from the Deccan. Obviously, the poor Siddis had migrated to other areas for their living¹⁵.

There are many people of African origin in Hyderabad as a large number of Africans slaves were sold there by the Arab merchants during the medieval period to the Raja of Wanaparthy, an influential noble of Hyderabad, who utilised their services as bodyguards and the watchmen of his landed properties. In this century, Sir Salar Jung, the Minister of the Nizam of Hyderabad, on observing their expertise in martial art, organised this robust community into an army unit called the Siddi Risala (Siddi Battalion). In 1948, when the Nizam's State, Hyderabad was merged into the Indian Union, the Siddi Risala was also disbanded alongwith other army units¹⁶.

Another branch of the Siddis that had stately status was of the Siddi Nawab of Adoni in Karnataka. He was a very pious man and imbibed the feeling of tolerance towards other religions. For instance, the great Raghavendra Swamiji, the Saint-Philosopher, 16th Sannyasi in succession to Acharya Madhva, who adorned the pontifical chair for 48 years since 1624 to 1671 was paid respects by him as done by other kings of his time. Once while touring to Adoni, near Raichur, the

Swami blessed an orphan cowherd Brahmin boy named Venkanna, who afterwards became Diwan under Nawab Siddi Masud Khan of Adoni. The Nawab was so impressed by Swami's supernatural powers and scholarly pursuits in all the fields of knowledge that he started worshipping him and granted the village 'Manchala' on the bank of Tungabhadra¹⁷.

Back to the subject proper, whenever a new Governor took over charge in Bombay, the Siddi of Janjira used to congratulate him in a regal tradition. The Siddi's protocol personnel used to specially go to Bombay for greeting the Governor. But now since the wheel of time had taken a full turn, seven such chiefs with swords and apparels, who had gone to Bombay in June 1835 for such a purpose, were detained as the said age-old practice infringed upon the Police Rules in vogue there. Though such insignificant incidents had no importance, they did have significance in the opinion of the native princes. This had even prompted Malcolm to comment thus: "Princes and Chiefs of India may in different degree be said to be all dependent on the British Government, many have little more than the name of that power they once enjoyed, but they seem as they lose substance to cling to the forms of station the pride of reason may smile at such a feeling, but it exists, and it would be alike opposite to the principles of humanity and policy to deny its gratification"¹⁸.

The Siddis continued to bask zealously in the glory of their past and the British too were sympathetic towards

them in their affairs with the deposed authorities who once were on inimical terms with them. In 1838, the Siddi of Janjira sent a gift of pair of shawls to a civil officer, Davies. The officer briefed the Acting Collector of Thana about it. Subsequently, the Political Agent decided that the said gift should be sold in auction and the sum fetched thereto be deposited in the Hon'ble Company's account.

In 1848, the Siddi renounced the authority in favour of his son Siddi Ibrahim Khan and surprisingly for several years nothing was heard about Janjira in Bombay, it being in its vicinity. In fact, the region of Janjira had attained notoriety for the crimes. Crime of whatever nature was attributed to the officials of the Siddi, to the Nawab himself and to his kith and kin¹⁹.

As far as the Angrias were concerned, in 1839, the navy of the Marathas and a small Jagir possessed since the time of Manaji Angria also went into the hands of the British in the absence of a direct heir to inherit it. Thus it was merged into the Kolaba district²⁰. This was a very crucial period for the British who were pursuing with zeal the policy of acquisition in India, and were endeavouring to strengthen their consolidation. In 1836, Lord Bentinck had assumed the control over the administration of Mysore. Dalhousie went on adding many Indian states following the 'Doctrine of Lapse' signifying in the absence of the natural heirs, the sovereignty of the state would cease to exist and would automatically pass over to the paramount power. The allies

under protective cover of the British were exempted from this doctrine. Thus Satara (1848), Jaitpur and Sambalpur (1849), Baghat (1850), Udaipur (1852), Nagpur (1853) and Jhansi (1854) were attached in this manner for want of any natural successors. Even the Mughal King was not spared and he was forced to shift from his ancestral palace in the Red Fort to the Qutub in Delhi. Such unexpected moves created suspicion in the minds of the old rulers of the principalities --- both Muslims as well as Hindus making them feel jittery. Even the adopted son of the Peshwa was denied his agreed pension. It was but natural that the general consternation and prevailing atmosphere of uneasiness ultimately led to alarming the revolt of 1857 which spread like wild fire all over the country and gave a jolt to the very foundation of the British authority, though they suppressed it with a strong hand²¹.

The revolt did not make any impact on Janjira but one Siddi Bastian and his brother Siddi Benove actively took part in it in the regions of Karwar, Supa and Bidi. The events which had taken place in Supa, had escaped the attention of the scholars for varied reasons including want of sufficient evidence, till recently when the new evidence has come out. Siddi Bastian's role in the insurrection in Supa is admirable. He had derived inspiration and support from Dipa Rane of Sattari, Goa. The opposition of Dipa Rane to the Portuguese as well as English was serious and he had seized the fort of Nanus in Sattari and plundered the magazine of ammunition and arms in 1852. He not only shook the base of the Portuguese in Sattari but also extended his hold on

Embarbarcem, Bicholim, Canacona and Quepem areas. Despite strictest measures adopted by the Portuguese government, Dipaji continued his attacks and his sphere of activity extended as far as Mangalore district. The British had taken steps to maintain law and order on the border of Dharwar and their Police co-operated with the Portuguese army of Goa in catching the culprits²². Sawant Dessais headed by Hanumant Sawant, who had been allowed refuge and protection by Dipaji, being repelled from all sides surrendered to the Portuguese authorities alongwith the families in October 1858. With this surrender, the disturbances on the Goa's north eastern border came to an end and Elphinstone sent his hearty congratulations to the Portuguese Governor-General for the success and informed him that Brigadier-General Jacob had directed Brigadier Fitzgerald that different detachments might be withdrawn from the Goa frontier²³. However, to the astonishment of the Portuguese and the British, the fresh inroads were made in north Karnataka on Goa's frontier soon after the withdrawal. Scared of this fresh disturbance, the British Governor of Madras, C.R. Trevelyan revealed to the Portuguese Governor-General that armed gangs of men who had participated in the late Bund had reappeared on the border of Karnataka and of the Goa territory and resumed their former pillaging activities. He added that some hamlets on the frontier had been set afire, several villagers hurt, some very seriously, others taken away as prisoners, while a big number of cattle and other farm properties had been devastated. He disclosed that the ring leader in these forays was Siddi Bastian for whose arrest a reward had been

announced earlier. The reward was further raised by J.D. Robinson from Rs.500/- to Rs.1,000/-. Siddi Bastian's gang in the meanwhile launched two attacks as several other fugitive gang members of the earlier Bund had joined him. They were a group of 30 to 40 well built men. The British took adequate steps and also sought the co-operation of the Portuguese to arrest them. However, the British were of the view that the Portuguese authorities were taking the matter lightly. Therefore, the British tried the tactics of inducing those who had suffered losses and offered them 100 acres of Coomery land to be enjoyed by them tax-free for a year. The rewards for the capture of the prominent Siddis were also announced. In the case of Siddi Benove, it was raised to the tune of Rs.1,000/- while for Vinjolekar Bhicoo and Karumbalekar Ghongloo and Karumbalekar Bablea, it was Rs.20/-.

Bastian belonged to the Siddi community. During the last century, they were found in a very small number in Supa, Yellapur and Ankola. His father or forefathers must have been baptized and hence he bore the Portuguese surname Sebastião. Since Supa forests were haunted by Dipa Rane, he must have been in touch with him during his forays. In April 1859, Siddi Bastian was on attacking spree and had raided Yellapur Munsif and his retinue while they were on their way to Goa. On 8th April, the Village Punsoli was set afire and a boy was murdered. The party of insurgents went on eluding the authorities till December 1859 when the offensive actions against them proved beneficial in totally silencing the Bund.

A person named Dessai gave the information and Colonel S. da Silva, in charge of Phonda and Embarbarcem in Goa provided him all help in catching them. As a result, most of the leaders of the Bund were captured. Siddi Bastian who had raised his head once again with great force in April 1859 was killed in the encounter with the British forces in August next. There was one more Siddi named Antu Siddi who was one of the leaders of the Bund in the encounter at Dandeli²⁴.

The role of Siddi eunuch nobles of Delhi and Lucknow for passing information in the 1857 revolt is well known. Mostly, they were posted in the royal harems and were very loyal to their masters. Being extremely religious, they contributed large sums to many religious institutions. There is another example which connects the Siddis with the revolt²⁵.

After quelling the 1857 revolt, India came under the control of the Crown. Till 1868, the principality of Janjira singularly enjoyed independence as there was no British Political Agent there to meddle in its administrative matters. At this juncture, the mishandling by the Chief of the matters pertaining to police and criminal justice, was rampant. Therefore, the British intervened and the Nawab was stripped of these powers, and a Resident British Officer with limited judicial authority was appointed there. The Nawab was left with only civil and revenue jurisdiction, but he was compelled to liaison with the British government through the Political Officer and to seek his advice²⁶.

As expected, like most of the Indian princes, the

Nawab too went to Bombay in 1870 to show his fealty to His Royal Highness, the Duke of Edinburgh and stayed there for a while hoping to regain his forfeited authority. At home, during his absence, the civil administration was in total disarray and a lot of irregularities in collecting the revenue came to the fore. The other prominent Siddi took advantage of his long absence and rebelled against his style of living, lavishness and his soft corner for the Hindu community. They went to the extent of seizing the fort and installed Siddi Ahmad Khan, the eldest legitimate son of the Nawab on the Masnad thereby defending their action by their right to unseat a chief on charges of negligence and incompetent handling of affairs. On hearing the news, the Nawab made a fervent appeal to the British Government in Bombay for help and it sent Mr. Havelock of the Bombay Civil Service to Janjira to inquire into the reasons of the rebellion. In the report which he submitted later on, he came to the conclusion that the pretexts of the prominent rebel Siddis were baseless, but they as well as the other subjects had a valid reason to grudge. The end result of this was that the Nawab had to consider an agreement which compelled him to initiate reforms in the administration under the supervision of the British Government. He was asked to maintain good police system, and to formulate revenue laws systematically. The Collector of the district of Kolaba was appointed Political Agent and the Resident stationed at Janjira as his assistant. Under this new pattern of administration, the Chiefs lost their age-old status though they continued to lay claims over it time and again. The

Nawab was even denied the title and the place for his own family to stay there. They were in fact treated as members of the fort garrison who could be discharged by the Political Agent at his free will any time²⁷.

In 1870s, no proper accounts were maintained and auditing was neglected in Janjira. There was virtually a chaos in the region. The forests were denuded by rackless cutting of trees for timber. The age-old tradition managing the lands under which the levy was collected in kind, was given up and instead of the grain-rent, a cash payment had been introduced since long. In the earlier period, in contrast with the Maratha revenue system, the Siddi used to commute more food-grains into cash. He levied more cess on bullock carts, and shops, and the orchards²⁸.

In the early 1870s, the British decided to go into the whole gamut of the various claims and demands of the Siddis of Janjira. In 1872, Mr. Solomon, the Political Agent, went deeply into them and realised that most of the high offices in the State of Janjira had been usually granted to those who were selected from time to time by the Nawab himself and they were paid salaries. He found that there were others as well who did not hold any office but by tradition were to draw allowances. The British therefore seized every opportunity to curtail the Nawab's authority. In the same year, when the Nawab was invited to attend the Durbar of Lord Northbrook in Bombay, he was in for a shock to see that he was relegated to the position below the Chief of Sachin. Being annoyed, next year the Nawab instigated the

disgruntled prominent Siddi authorities against the British. They in turn sought pardon for their action in ousting him and requested him to return their lands and allowances. In the same vein, the Prabhu officials who used to wield tremendous influence on the Nawab were prevented from occupying any posts. Surprisingly, when the Nawab visited Bombay again in 1875 to pay his obeisance to His Royal Highness, the Prince of Wales, he was much delighted for the kind reception accorded to him by the Prince. In the following year, the Nawab gave up his monopoly on the sale of tobacco, cancelled the customs duties on persons going out of his State by sea and also introduced a steamer service between Bombay and Janjira. In 1877, on account of the poor harvest in Janjira resulting into a great loss for his treasury, he was allowed to abstain from the imperial conclave in Delhi. But in the same year his state was beset with several communal riots between Hindus and Muslims. As per the rules of the State in force then, the religious processions of the Hindus and music were prohibited during the month of Ramjan, from the 1st to the 12th of Muharram, and during two other months. Music was not allowed on Sunday or Thursday nights and on Fridays. In case weddings or main Hindu festivals fell during the restricted periods, the Hindus were permitted to play music inside their houses, provided the house was not situated in the vicinity of a mosque or a Muslim's residence. In November 1877, the squabble between the Nawab and his chiefs came again to the fore. Many chiefs approached Mr. W.G. Pedder, the political Agent with their individual and joint complaints. The

grievances covered a very wide range of subjects including the influence wielded by the officials of Prabhu community, deforestation of Inami lands, non-resumption of grants, taking away the rights over land-holders, the inaction on sending replies or attending to redress among others. The inquiries conducted by the Agent however disclosed that police and criminal administration had shown the marked improvement. There was growth in the field of education as well. But all the wings of the administration were infested with rampant corruption. The land revenue system of converting grain rents into cash at the prevailing prices as per the desire of any landholder was not conducive to the state though the taxes were not levied in excess. But it was observed that the officers embezzled the revenue thereby cheating the people. A major share of the revenue was utilised to meet the grants and claims and no proper account was maintained. The old claims were done away with and new ones were granted violating the rules and regulations. While the financial system was in disarray, the audit was given up and the civil justice had been a travesty. No developmental works were promoted. To meet the demand of the subjects, a Karbhari was appointed in 1878 with Civil and magisterial powers. However, soon the Nawab Siddi Ibrahim died on 28th January 1879. He left behind three sons -- two illegitimate and one legitimate who was the youngest among them, Siddi Ahmad Khan. At the time of his death, the group supporting the illegitimate sons was more powerful and succeeded in installing the eldest son as Nawab ignoring even the objection from the Assistant Agent. The Bombay Government

pronounced this choice as illegal and gave due recognition to Siddi Ahmad Khan, conferring on him the title of Nawabship on 11th June 1879. The young Nawab who was just 19, remained far away in Rajkot for his college studies till September 1881 and till he turned major, the Karbhari assisting the Assistant Agent looked after the state under the direct supervision of the Poligical Agent. On his return from Rajkot, the young Nawab was advised to spend some time in Poona for acquainting himself with the intricacies of the administration. On 30th January 1882, the Nawab entered into a wedlock with Ahmad Bibi Saheba, the sister of the Nawab of Savnur. However, within three years she passed away and subsequently the Nawab married the daughter of Haji Hasan Faizee of Bombay. In March 1883 when the Nawab returned home from Poona, Mr. Solomon acted as a Jt. Administrator in order to involve the Nawab in the administrative affairs. In a few months' time, the Governor of Bombay authorised him with all the powers withdrawing the Jt. Administrator. The Nawab who was amiable by nature attracted slowly his subjects by his side. He took up a lot of welfare activities including the starting of a high school, drawing class and promoted physical education in the state. The roads were constructed in Murud by cleaning the jungles. In 1892, he strived hard to provide potable water for the city by building up Victoria Jubilee Water Works. He soon introduced in Janjira several modern facilities including municipal and local board institutions. On account of such welfare activities, the British Government conferred upon the Nawab, the title of Knight Commander of the Indian Empire (K.C.I.E.). The Nawab

was allowed to raise a force of 700 men for garrisoning the fort and for police duty and was allowed to receive a salute of 9 guns²⁹. He happened to be the last Nawab and was known for building the royal palace at Murud which took six years for its completion since 1894. He had hired the services of a Turkish Architect for designing it so as to give it a touch of architecture of Istanbul. The majestic royal palace had a large living room, several quarters, a grand grotto which had the access through the swimming pool and a billiards room to be reckoned with³⁰.

Thus we see that while the Maratha power had a rise and fall, the Siddis enjoyed the eminence for long in India. Though their power declined, the Siddis continued to cling to the sea-coast at Janjira with enviable tenacity till a heavy hand of the iron man, indomitable Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel put Janjira into oblivion. On reorganising the States, it continues to be an insignificant part of the Raigad district of Maharashtra. However, the fort of Janjira still stands erect today notwithstanding the vagaries of time, the general neglect and the total disregard displaying its centuries-old faded glory.

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CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

Though the foreign powers, the British, Dutch, French and the Portuguese have left the Indian shores forever, the Siddis, descendants of Africans, especially the Abyssinians, are very much here to stay permanently with their unusual cultural heritage. They are found today in quite a large number in different regions of Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka etc., and though a few of them have assimilated themselves in the Indian society, most of them continue to maintain their indigenous customs, traditions, identity and the way of life despite settling in India for several centuries. Their colour, curly hair and thick lips at once reveal the presence of African blood and they evoke interest in others to know more about their past.

The history of African diaspora in India, throws more light on how man has treated the other man as the tides of time changed. Nowhere the political climate was so conducive as it was in India and this fact has been explained in previous chapters showing how the humble people of African origin shipped to India as slaves ultimately rose to the status of royalty in some parts of the country. The practice of slavery did exist in India even during the Vedic period. It was in vogue even during the time of Lord Buddha. Kautilya's Arthashastra amply reveals the evil custom of slavery practised in his time. All through the ages, the slave was a person who had to do any kind of labour and menial work for his or her master in those days¹.

The practice continued thereafter but the Africans were enslaved and brought to India initially only by the Arabs. Lucky were those who were treated kindly by their possessors. Subsequently, the Portuguese also continued the age-old trading in slaves into India as actively as it was done prior to their arrival here. Hence, for promoting this immoral traffic in slaves in India, the finger cannot be pointed at the Portuguese alone. African slaves were sold in the old market of Goa by the Portuguese as they sold Persian and Arab horses there. Of course, the treatment meted out to the African slaves differed from time to time, and there is no doubt that Muslim powers in India treated them in a far better way than foreigners or other Indian potentates. The Portuguese fidalgos exploited them to the maximum. The well-known traveller Mandelslo who had been in western India in 1638-1639 comments about slavery of the time in Goa thus: "Most of the Portuguese have many slaves of both sexes whom they employ not only about their persons, but also upon any other business they are capable of, for what they get, comes into the master. Whence it comes that handsome wenches are sought after, to be employed in the selling of fruits and such commodities as the Portuguese send to market, to the end their beauty might draw in customers. Their keeping as to diet stands them in very little. The children born between slaves belong to the master, unless the father will redeem them within eight or ten days after they are born"².

It is significant to note that very few spouses came to India with the Portuguese adventurers or fidalgos.

Naturally they opted for any women of their choice not only for company but also subsequently with the aim of procreating a new mixed breed of soldiers who could fight for them. An account of a Jesuit missionary amply proves that ever since the Portuguese set foot in India, they indulged in enslaving and baptising Indians in large numbers by 1550 through intimidation tempting them of worldly gains and for spreading the Christianity. They bought numerous slaves from far and distant places including Indian port towns and there were many Portuguese who had four, eight or ten female slaves in their households, and they took maximum advantage of their helplessness³.

However, the case of African slaves was altogether different. Firstly, to capture and transport them so far away in India, a place unknown to them was a cruel act. Secondly, while transporting they were equated with the animals and shipped similarly in the lower decks like any other cargo. They were allowed to bask in sunlight on the upper decks only once a week during the voyage the duration of which was for months together. Separation from their kith and kin and unimaginable sufferings led to their nervous breakdown. Once purchased by the client, they were totally at the mercy of their owners. According to Pyrard de Laval who visited Goa in early 17th century, most of the earnings and riches the Portuguese amassed in Goa were through the hard labour put in by the slaves in their possession. As a result, a strange tendency grew in Goa to procure and retain as many slaves as possible in the households. The female slaves even posed as intermediaries for the ardent lovers.

The persons of nobility and ladies of higher strata always moved in palanquins carried by four male slaves in the company of several female slaves in silk, who followed them. They were even asked to march in chains and Pyrard himself had an occasion to see the miserable death of a slave under such circumstances⁴. Despite toiling like beasts in farms and doing all sorts of sundry menial work, they were fed a dish of rice once a day, and even for a petty offence, they used to be flogged to death⁵.

Moreover, the Portuguese used to baptise soon all those who were enslaved by them and it was but natural that to escape from unimaginable rigours of life, many of them opted to flee away to the states under Muhammedan rulers, who esteemed them for several reasons. The Muslim rulers enlisted the male slaves in their navies and armies where several of them made a mark and built up their careers. Later men like Malik Ambar and other prominent Siddi chiefs welcomed their brethren from Africa and took them into their fold. There are countless examples of slaves thus leaving Goa clandestinely. The trend registered such a growth that the Portuguese were compelled to sign separate contracts with Nizamshahi, Adilshahi and Maratha rulers for extraditing the slaves back or their value in terms of money. However, even the stringent measures pursued by the Portuguese authorities could not prevent the slaves from running away from Goa to the neighbouring territories and the practice continued even in the next centuries because the human being has an inborn quality to be free from the clutches of bondage. However, since the African slaves were chased even after their flights from

Goa and their skin colour and negroid features would easily reveal their identity, many of them had no other option than to seek hideouts in thick jungles.

Though not generally known, the cruelty of their Portuguese masters was so horrible that the King of Portugal was informed that the slaves in his cities, forts and other possessions were penalised so intensely inflicting them severe and painful torments that many succumbed to death. Subsequently, they were buried sometimes in the houses or backyards thereby giving rise to great scandals. The King therefore had to instruct the Viceroy to investigate into such cases officially in Goa under the Chancellorship of the Court and in other cities, forts and places by the respective Auditors. Those involved in the crime were to be prosecuted as per the Portuguese law and all the slaves were to be manumitted in case it was proved that they were subjected to utter negligence on the part of their masters. Also, their subsistence was to be managed at the cost of their old cruel masters till the Court gave its judgement⁶.

Under these prevailing circumstances, the slaves were forced to resort to other illegal activities like committing murders and thefts. By the end of the 16th century, markets of Goa were reported to have suffered a setback on account of the thefts by 'Cafres' (Kafir meaning Africans), and despite the steps taken to repress the menace, the situation did not show any marked improvement. During the night, the slaves started holding a market where all sorts of stolen articles were available at cheap and reduced rates⁷.

On the other hand, despite the Royal order and the inquiries frequently conducted by the authorities, the ill-treatment and abuses caused to the slaves continued unabated. The situation took a worse turn in beginning of the 17th century as we see the Senate of Goa promulgating an order in this regard in 1618, which states that anybody expelling an ailing slave (male or female) suffering from any disease without getting him/her cured will pay a fine of 10 and 20 'Pardaos' for the first and second time respectively. In case a hurrack or toddy seller provided the slave shelter or food or wine at his residence or shop or chained him, the offender was to pay a fine of 1000 'reis' and the slave was to be manumitted. Nobody including the Portuguese and married settlers were to allow the slave entry in their gambling houses or verandahs - failing which the violator was to pay a fine of 5 and 10 xerafins on first and second occasion respectively. Any Captain, Thanedar of outpost found carrying any fugitive slaves to his residence was to be fined 10 'Pardaos'.⁸

These provisions amply point out the fact that the slaves, majority of them Africans, used to often leave Goa deserting their insolent masters in search of better days elsewhere. As long as the slave trade was in vogue, this practice of flights also continued. For example, Dnyanalingayya Navaru from the nearby Sunda Kingdom informed the Portuguese Secretary on the 12th May 1736 that the negroes fled from Goa had not entered his territory and if it was to be the case, he would have already captured them and sent them back to him⁹. In December 1747, he again informed

him that he had handed over Negroes to the concerned guard but they had revealed him that they used to work under one Francisco who had gone aboard the ship having instructed them to earn their bread wherever possible¹⁰.

It is relevant to underline here that Daman was another Portuguese establishment from where many slaves used to cross over to the territories of Chauthia Raja. In 1695, while signing a treaty with this King, the Portuguese Viceroy suggested a clause under which the Chauthia Raja was expected to catch hold and return the fugitive slaves to the Portuguese. In case he failed to do so, he was to pay 300 xerafins per fugitive slave, and this sum was to be deducted from the Chauth paid by the Portuguese¹¹.

Over and beyond the general duties in the households, since the African slaves were extremely loyal to their masters, the Portuguese did not hesitate to engage them for committing heinous crimes and murders in Goa. Despite the stringent steps adopted by the law enforcing authorities, the slaves did indulge in the murders unmindful of serious consequences and ramifications. As early as the late 16th century, the situation had turned so serious that Viceroy Dom Duarte de Menezes had issued a Charter in 1586 banning the slaves from carrying bamboos, sticks, lathis and any other arms failing which they were to pay a heavy fine to the tune of 2000 xerafins or 30 lashes near the 'Pelourinho' (pillory), apart from jail term for 20 days. In case the attack was made on any Portuguese, the slave was to be sent into exile in galleys for 12 years¹².

The practice of getting the people annihilated through the Negro slaves persisted throughout in the 17th century as the influential Portuguese 'fidalgos' used with impunity the slaves in this crime with utter disregard to the laws of the land. In reality, the weak Portuguese administration could practically do nothing to put a stop to these sordid crimes though we observe them emphasising the adherence to the instructions and steps in this regard with more stringent modifications throughout the 17th century. Since such crimes had not abated, Conde de Alvor, was compelled to issue an order on 18th October 1681 announcing that if any secular person was traced on the roads of Goa during day time or night with fire arms and other objectionable weaponry even accompanying anyone in palanquins or andores with the exception of the dress-swords and daggers, he would be taken into custody and imprisoned and could be sent into exile to Mozambique or Mombassa irrevocably for six years, in addition to the payment of 200 Pardaos as a penalty. If the Negro slaves were noticed during the day going with their owners by 'bambus machos' in their hands without Sobreiros, the government was to seize them. If the Negro was found holding bamboo or other offensive arms during the night, he was to be taken into custody by officials of Justice or by anyone. The Justice officials were authorised to penalise them even with death sentence. The strict law required that the people, if found moving during night time even after the last bells, could land in jail for 2 months attracting a fine of 50 xerafins¹³.

The executors of the crime through the slaves were equally to be blamed, though they remained far off from the

arms of the law. The trade in slaves was so lucrative that by 1790, the slaves exported from Africa by European traders totalled 74,000 --- the British (38,000), the French (20,000), the Dutch (4,000), Danes (2,000) and the Portuguese (10,000).

To put a halt to this traffic, Lord Cornwallis had formulated a plan for abolishing the slavery itself. There was a widespread public clamour against this evil practice and the universal indignation had a great effect on the thinking of the Portuguese Crown as well as the Viceroy and Governor-Generals in the 19th century. And the Portuguese did start introducing more and more stringent measures to check the menace. As a result of the public opinion ranged against it, Portuguese Crown issued an order on 26th January 1818 from Rio de Janeiro banning the slave trade in all the parts of Africa to the north of Equator according to the ratified treaty of 2nd January 1815 and the Additional Convention of 28th July 1817. Any one found transporting the slaves in the areas earmarked above was to forfeit his vessel and slaves who would be automatically manumitted. The officials of such ships were to be degraded and asked to go to Mozambique for 5 years and each one of them was to pay penalty equivalent to the soldier's pay. The insurers of the vessels were to pay a fine thrice the sum of the premium. However, the immensity of the issue can be judged from the number of the slaves living then on the western coast of India. In the two decades of the 19th century, around 1819, there were 80,000 slaves in Karnataka and 1,00,000 in Malabar alone. Later on in 1841, according to the calculations of Sir Barle Frere the slave population in British India was of

almost 8 to 9 millions as against the Regulation X passed by the Company Government in 1811 and Regulation III of 1832 which said: "All slaves removed for the purpose of traffic from any province, British or foreign, into any province subject to the Presidency of Fort William or from one province so subject to another subsequently to the enactment of Regulation X of 1811 should be considered free". However, only the Act V of 1843 turned out to be very effective and it paved way to the law of total abolition of slavery in British India. This was also responsible for the introduction of the Penal Code of 1860 which banned the slave trade and possession of slaves in India. The Portuguese Crown too had issued a Decree in 1843 bestowing the right to all the slaves to seek their natural liberties and declared all the slaves free¹⁴.

However, declaring the trafficking in slave illegal was not quite the same as ending it, and the British had to take strict measures to enforce the provisions. A huge amount was paid to Spain and Portugal to convince them to give up the ludicrous trade. A slave squadron was set up to patrol the Atlantic, rescue slaves and transport them to Sierra Leone where the British had established a set-up to educate the Africans¹⁵.

As pointed out earlier, it was the cruel treatment meted out to the slaves by the Portuguese gentry that sent them fleeing away to seek better avenues in other states particularly those ruled by Muslims. As late as 1795, there were reports disclosing that some Portuguese prisoners and slaves used to run away from Goa to Kalanidhi¹⁶. The

concerned Portuguese usually approached their counterparts in the neighbouring territories of others to get back the fugitive slaves.

But there is no doubt that the African slaves were loyal and that's the one quality for which they were highly priced and favoured specially by their Muslim masters who often promoted them to climb the ladder of power. Whereas, this same quality of theirs was misutilised by their Portuguese masters for inspiring them to commit crimes and murders. Though the ignominious practice of slavery was abolished in the Portuguese 'Estado da India', many men still continued with it clandestinely as it was quite a lucrative investment for them. A letter dated 8th September 1853 from Bras Fernandes, Portuguese Consular Agent in Bombay to A. Mallet, Chief Secretary of Bombay Government, reveals the detention of five African boys (slaves) by the British authorities. Since the boys had the passports secured from Mozambique, he requested him to reply early so as to allow him to proceed to Daman with the boys¹⁷. The case is a clear example which unfolds the attempt being made by one power to curb the banned trade being practiced by the other.

In contrast to all these actions, the Siddi of Janjira had provided however all the Africans in India every opportunity to live with a sense of pride. His doors remained open for them. When the British attained the status of a paramount power in India and the Siddi faced financial crunch, there were many blacks of African origin, who joined the bands of Pindaris for their survival and better prospectus¹⁸. Once the prosperous days of the ruler of

Janjira were over, the Siddis could no longer withstand against the British onslaught. They could no longer challenge the British frequently as they could seize two vessels in the vicinity of Chaul and Bassein in 1636¹⁹.

On manumission and subsequent emancipation of slaves in 1833 in the British empire, the freed Negroes were found reluctant to proceed to work in the lands of the West Indies. Whereas the Indian labourers opted to go to Mauritius as well as to work in sugar and cocoa plantations in the West Indies²⁰.

The Siddis had another quality that of daring seafarers. They were gifted commanders of the sea, and the sea naturally attracted them. Siddi Ali Rais for instance in 1554 was entrusted with the command of the fleet of the Ottoman Empire. While cruising his fleet, his ships were attacked near Hormuz by the Portuguese warships. Later, the ships went astray by the stormy winds and his own ship drifted along the shore of Gujarat. He was stranded there for about a year, but he seized an opportunity to put down the survey charts of navigation in the Indian ocean from Arabic sources known as Muhit and when on returning home, he prepared an account of his adventures known as Mirat-al-Mamalik²¹.

But this is yet only one side of the picture. On account of indulging in a series of murders in Goa, the African community in general in India as well had earned the notoriety for the criminal acts of similar nature. They had put to death a large number of people in Bengal and the

victims included commoners, at times the chiefs and even the Sultans. In Bijapur, for instance it was a case of a Siddi chief who eliminated brave Chand Bibi. Earlier, the celebrated General Mahmud Gawan, had been slain by Zuruf-ool-Moolk Deccany and Siddi Mifta, the Abyssinian²².

On the other hand, some were quite lucky in carving out a better future for them in the society and they acclamatized themselves to the prevailing political climate and settled as traders. For example, a passport was issued by the Portuguese to a Hindu Siddi named Bassavya in 1712. He was a merchant from Bidnur in Canara and used to ply his ship to Congo. The passport contained the instructions not to bring or carry any Christian slaves but only his own people and personal slaves²³.

Significantly, the Siddis were employed by other communities such as Hindus, Muslims and Christians. As early as 1621, we find Siddi Belal, 36-year old, as commander of Nizamshah's ship going to Hormuz²⁴. There were a number of Siddis in the Maratha navy right from the period of Shivaji to the time of Peshwas. However, the number of such Siddis was not very large and majority of them had fled from Goa to the thick jungles for shelter. In Goa, they were called Khapris or Cafres, the appellation attached to all the Negroes irrespective of their status. But once they crossed Goa's borders they were branded as Siddis. The enslaved black men and women, lifted forcibly from their varied environment in different parts of Africa had the dissimilar backgrounds. They came from different linguistic areas and their customs and beliefs differed from each others'. Some had the status

of tribal kings, nobles, some were commoners, some members forced from various tribes, came together accidentally during their forced captivity. In their migration under compulsion, they came with their age-old traditional and customary beliefs. They cherished their own tribal philosophy and faiths, and their attachment to the forest still continued in the alien hostile lands²⁵.

The African slaves in India had made their own contribution to the society at large irrespective of the fact, whether their services were utilised for imperial expansion or for development and growth of kingdoms or for sending them on battle fronts. They were a great asset as cheap labourers. Initially, armies of slaves were enlisted by the Muslim rulers to safeguard their own interests. The Portuguese too adopted the same policy and Hindu rulers were not behind in engaging them in their armed and naval forces. However, their brilliant achievement lied in the foundation of the principality at Janjira which they built up and fostered it so zealously for centuries unmindful of any sacrifices.

The modus operandi adopted in the operation of enslavement was not unusual. A slaving agent used to wander here and there deep in the interior of the African continent and used to buy the slaves from the chieftains, and later on used to bring the captives to the sea-ports to sell them to the Portuguese who transported them aboard their vessels to Goa and various Asian ports. The Negro agents would bring to the coast 5,000 to 6,000 slaves at a time in chains and

thereafter would stop their activity for a year or two. At times the Portuguese themselves would venture to penetrate the interior regions of the continent with the help of European and 'Mulatto' soldiers followed by several thousand native Africans. They were forced to walk in chains hundreds of miles towards the coast. The captives had a miserable time prior to reaching the ports. In case of non-availability of ships to start an onward sea journey, they were put up in a big dwellings near the ports and were forced to work during the day. Before the sea journey, they were baptized by the Parish Priest in batches of hundreds at a time. It was he who renamed each slave with Christian name. He used to give each one of them a piece of paper on which his/her name was written. He also used to keep a pinch of salt on his/her tongue and sprinkle holy water over the crowd. They were categorised in several age groups. There were children from 8 to 15 years, youth from 15 to 25 years and adults from 25 to 35 years, in addition to the infants who clinged to their mothers²⁶.

On arrival in Goa port, they were auctioned to the highest bidder just like the Persian and Arab horses in the old market of Goa. On the day of the auction, they were cleaned well and anointed with oil. Their faces were painted red with white stripes and their wooly hair were daubed with yellow turmeric powder which colour was considered by the poor tribal Africans as symbolic of beauty and elegance. They were paraded nude in the market and the buyer ensured that the slave was without any defect of speech or hearing.

The purchaser also took care to see that the slaves were neither habituated with snoring nor grinding their teeth while in sleep. Prior to buying, each part of the body was examined²⁷.

It must be emphasized that mainly on account of the harassment and unimaginable tortures, mental and physical agonies, the slaves—males or females used to run away from Goa the moment they got opportunities to escape. Being attracted by the forest regions, they formed their first destination. In several cases, they turned to be the original settlers of the villages in Western India. They dared the wild animals, combated with ease the deadly malaria and made inroads into the thick jungles which were preferred by them to the newly civilized zones of their Portuguese fidalgos in Goa. They used to choose the convenient areas for raising their huts to dwell in. Nearby they used to clear up the vegetation and start cultivation. They also used to collect honey and tactfully hunted animals and enjoyed fishing. Wild boars and deers, iguanas, rabbits, ant eaters and other animals are still hunted by them during the monsoon and the harvest seasons. Today, the Siddis are least concerned with their future and feel happy once they have a few rupees in hand²⁸.

Incredible as it may seem, the Siddis settled in north Karnataka are Hindus, Muslims and Christians. Since most of the area south Konkan downwards is hilly with thick forest cover, it provided the natural habitat for the Siddis. One of their localities is at Siddapur, though they are wide-

spread all over the Ghat areas. Some are traced in Ankola where they are dispersed southwards along the Belgaum-Jog Falls road, and along the Hubli-Karwar road. On the Belgaum-Jog Falls road, their localities begin at Gaodhalli in Haliyat Taluka reaching upto Bharthirhalli. On the Hubli-Karwar road, they live between Kiruvathi and Sunksal. While the Muslim Siddis follow polygamy, the Hindu and Christian Siddis prefer monogamy. The majority of Siddis do not own land and those who do so are considered in esteem²⁹.

It is interesting to know their gradual integration with the Indian society. They have adopted the total Hindu culture of the regions and secondly they have followed the social structure of various religions. Thus, they are trying to maintain a place for themselves in Indian culture and at the same time are in search of a slot in each religion --- Hinduism, Islam and Christianity. In Karnataka, the Hindu Siddis are laying claim on the local caste hierarchy. They consider themselves superior to and above the 'Bandhis' and 'Namadaris' on the ladder of castes but below the Havig Brahmins and Okkals. While they dine in Havig Brahmin's house, the food is served to them outside the house. The Okkals also treat them in similar manner. The 'Bandhis' and the 'Namadaris' are willing to host the Siddis inside the house, but Siddis feel themselves higher in the caste hierarchy and shun dining with them. The same is the case with the Christians and Muslims. The local Christians consider themselves superior to Siddi Christians and hence they shun intermarriages with them. Both Muslim and Christian Siddis have a separate status within their

respective religions. The Muslim Siddis trace their past to the Kingdom of Bijapur. In justification of it, they point out their surnames like Naik, Havaldar, Patel etc. But the Christians Siddis reveal their connection with Goa and believe that their ancestors were shipped by the Portuguese from Africa to Goa from where they escaped to North Kanara. The Hindu Siddis believe that their forefathers were transported to India by the Arabs and sold to rich Havig Brahmins. Another account discloses that the King of 'Haina' in north Kanara, had purchased several of the Siddis from the Arab merchants, and when his kingdom was captured by Hyder Ali, they escaped from there and led a free life. The aforesaid accounts clearly show that the Siddis adopted the religions of their masters. Though Christians Siddis speak Konkani and Kannada, their mothertongue still remains Konkani. Muslim Siddis speak Urdu and Kannada but their mothertongue is Urdu. The Siddis are proud of their religions. Muslim Siddis are of Sunni sect and claim direct lineage from Mohammad, and their Guru is 'Baba Ghor'. It is believed that they are not converts.

The Hindu Siddis live in the Ghat areas of Yellapur and Ankola and their locality lies in the midst of other local Hindu settlements. It is believed that these Siddis were not converted to Hinduism. Having lived for long in the predominantly Hindu areas they have adopted the Hindu customs, traditions, rites, rituals and ceremonies in the course of time. Some among the Hindu Siddis surprisingly eat pork. Those who shun eating pork were originally Muslims and entered the Hindu fold lately as can be discerned from the

surnames like Jumma, Fakira, Ismail³⁰.

Most of the Maratha Siddis found in clusters in Supa, Yellapur and Ankola reside in the thickets where they originally settled after slipping from Goa centuries ago. They had been baptized in Goa and adopted new religion after taking residence in Karnataka. Their names are partly Christian as Mannia for Manoel, and Bastian for Sebastian, and partly Kannada as Pootia, Sanna, and Lookda. However, all women's names are Kannada as Jetu, Puti, Laxmi, Gampi, Semi, Sukri and Nagu, and this clearly indicates that only male slaves had run away from Goa. Subsequently, they married the lower class people in Canara after crossing the border. Their surnames are Musen, Matua, Muzua, Yambani and Marai. Persons with the same surnames can intermarry. They speak Konkani and they believe to be the descendants of Mozambicans. It appears for sure they have the connection with the Siddis hailing from Goa. It is significant to observe that though they eat with them, they do not marry. They are dark in complexion, retain their peculiar features like thick lips, curly beards and hair, and slanting foreheads. However, they are not as black as the Christian Siddis and this transformation in colour has taken place on account of the intermarriages with the Hindus of Canara.

The community has also an hereditary headman called 'Budvant' with an orderly called Kelkar. Any violation of social practice is punishable either with fine or excommunication subsequent to the resolution at a meeting of castemen under the chairmanships of the 'Budvant'. If the

offender defies the decision he is treated as out-caste until he admits his mistake³¹.

In Junagarh district of Gujarat, there are about 8,000 Siddis of African descent All of them still retain their distinctive features. They are Muslims and speak Gujarati. They, like their counterparts elsewhere in the country, live in abject poverty, though they have long been accepted as equal to any other tribal community. They are found at Sirwar and at Jambur in Talala taluka in large numbers. They are also traced in small groups in Talala, Veraval, Malia and Junagad talukas. But these are believed to be the descendants of fugitive slaves who settled on the outskirts of the Gir forest. The local residents of the areas believe that they might have been the progeny of the Negro slaves of Malek Ayaz, the district officer of the region, ruled by Sultan of Ahmedabad who had many of them in his service. This is also discernible from the existence of the dargah of Nagarsha Pir, an Abyssinian Negro saint of Jambur. His elder brother Bava Ghor who was also a mendicant, later on entered the business of extracting semi-precious stones especially agates, locally known there as akik. In this business, he did the pioneering work of excavation of stones, baking and lapidary works. His younger brother Bava Saban expanded his business in Africa, and Arabian countries. Later on, both, Nagarsha Pir and Bava Ghor were recognised by the Siddis as their saints, the latter being worshipped in a shrine at Ratanpur village of Jhagadia taluka of the Broach district, where he had settled in his last years of life³².

Incidentally, it may be pointed out that the Nawab of Janjira had claimed some rights over the Nawab of Junagarh while a dispute had cropped up there between the latter and the Nawab of Jafarabad in 1835. In 1836, both the parties accepted the agreement which was made by the British government of Bombay and the Nawab of Janjira exercised suzerainty over Jafarabad³³.

The Siddis from Broach district of Gujarat are known in Gujarat for their striking African features. Their vigorous music, dance and costumes are typically African. They dance in praise of 'Baba Ghor'. Most of these Siddi artistes earn their living by doing odd jobs and are said to be exploited by landlords. They speak in a language that is a mix of Gujarati and Swahili³⁴.

Like the Konkani Muslims of Thana, Kolaba and Ratnagiri, the Konkani Muslims of Janjira were partly the descendants from Persian and Arab immigrants between the 7th and 14th centuries. The Siddis settled there during the 15th and 16th centuries during the Nizamshahi and Adilshahi rules. Most of the Siddis had blood relations with the Nawab and hence received state grants. They were tall, sturdy and well built with good features and brown and wheat skins. The men shaved their heads and wore the beard of poor growth. The women never appeared in public and wore Hindu robes. Wealthy Siddis decorated their mansions by hanging the swords, shields, lances, muskets, knives and daggers on the walls³⁵. Today, they live in Bombay. They are very fond of dancing and have been performing in cultural centres of the country in Bombay and Delhi.

Many Siddis are still found in Hyderabad, the capital of Andhra Pradesh. There is a popular place called 'Habshi Guda' and a mosque known as the Habshi Masjid. A few thousand of them live in the vicinity of the capital where there is an area inhabited by the blacks known as 'Siddi Ganj'. The Habshis of Hyderabad speak Urdu in contrast to those in Ahmedabad who speak Gujarati. They are mostly the descendants of the army men in Nizam's 'Siddi Risala' which was disbanded after the integration of Hyderabad in the Indian Union³⁶.

The Siddis of Janjira also recruited in their services the Kolis, Bhandaris and other fisherfolk from the neighbourhood. The age-old pride and tradition among the Siddis is still visible while one sees them singing and dancing in tune with the flute and drum throughout the night in the company of their community members. Their popular folk songs are Balo, Leva and Bandugia which are replete with feelings for the community, its pride, and religious fervour. Channogi and Damali are their religious-cum-spiritual dances and they help them in retaining their spiritual strength and aspirations³⁷.

The Gujarati Siddis hold their musical instruments in great veneration, and never touch them unless they are ceremonially pure. They call the rattle or Junjhuna the instrument of Mama of Mother Misrah, and their big drum that of the leading male saint. If a Siddi is careless in touching the instruments when sexually impure, Mother Misrah or Father Ghor is sure to punish the offender³⁸.

The Siddis have left behind several mansions and the forts which are today part and parcel of this great Indian cultural heritage. Besides the wonderful fort of Janjira, and the royal palaces at Murud, they have left their imprint on Anjanvel also³⁹. Anjanvel which was later named by the Marathas as Gopalgad was originally built by Adilshah in the 16th century. Later, it was strengthened by Shivaji in 1660, and improved upon by his son Sambhaji. In 1699, the fort was attacked and captured by Siddi Khairiyat Khan who added the lower fort in 1707, the year in which he died. The Persian stone inscription in the form of verses reveals the date of its construction as 1707 and the builder's name as Siddi Saat. At Balapur in the close vicinity of Dabhol creek, there is a mosque in ruins and a shrine of soft red laterite, which was constructed with the grant of Habshi ruler around 1650⁴⁰.

There is also a mosque of Pir Karimuddin (1665 A.D.) built by Siddi of Janjira at the foot of the fortress of Piro⁴¹. There is a Siddi Said mosque built in 1572 in Ahmadabad. Its walls have become world famous due to the perforated screens, some of which represent the 'palm-and-parasite' motif and have the delicacy of filigree-work⁴². There is yet another mosque there known as Siddi mosque⁴³.

Besides these, there are three huge stone tombs in the Indo-Saracenic style in Khokari, a village opposite the Janjira fort. The largest of them is of Siddi Surul Khan who ruled Janjira from 1707-1733. The two smaller ones are the

tombs of Siddi Qassim who was in charge of Janjira from 1670-1677. The third one is of Siddi Khairiyat Khan who administered Danda-Rajpuri from 1670-1677 and Janjira from 1677-1696. There are five Mazars in the fort of Janjira. According to a legend, these are symbolic Mazars dedicated to those who sank in the sea. These architectural works were the handiworks of the Siddis and the Muslims in Janjira⁴⁴.

Thus the saga of African diaspora in India is full of misery, bravery, adventures and excitement. Transported originally as slaves on the shores of India, the Siddis etched out a niche for themselves in the Indian political arena. Their advance from ignominious slavery to prestigious royalty was long and full of hardships, but they attained the respectable status in India by 16th century. Today, their descendants are scattered in many parts of the country, but most of them live in a miserable condition. India is a country that has absorbed through the ages many races of the world. These Siddis of African origin also deserve better deal. Though the Sports Authority of India has recently harnessed the genetic advantages of the Siddis to mould them to become future athletic champions of India, more serious efforts are needed to educate and train them on modern scientific lines for their overall personal development. If their talents are encouraged, they can contribute a lot specially in the fields of sports and Indian navy and armed services. Their cultural attributes of varied nature also need to be safeguarded. A variety of their rich artefacts can still be collected and could be displayed in a gallery in an Indian museum of repute. A feature film on the subject

will go a long way not only to preserve this unique cultural heritage, but also to give chance to their scattered population to know about their past and identity. There should not be any difficulty in this aspect as there are a lot of people of African origin who could be engaged in the project. Further, exploring the rich underwater cultural heritage in and around the fort of Janjira is likely to pay rich archaeological dividends. The Indian navy and the Marine Archaeology Unit of the National Institute of Oceanography can play an important role in this project and it will not be a surprise that vast treasure of great historical importance may emerge out of this to throw further light on many unknown facts about the Siddis of Janjira.

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APPENDIX A

Livro de Pazes, HAG, 52ff.

Copia das Condições com que o Ex.^{mo} S.^{or} João Nunes da Cunha, Conde de São Vicente, V. Rey, e Capitão Geral de estado da India, Gentil homē da Câmara de S.A. aceita por feudatário ao estado da India, ao Ilustre Sydy Principe e S.^{or} de Danda Raja pury na forma das Capitulações que com o dito Sydy celebrou com ordem do dito S.^{or} Conde de V. Rey, Dom Jeronimo Manoel, Almirante da Armada Real, e Ceral do Estreito de Ormuz, do Cons.^o de S. Mag.^{de}, Capitão Mór das Naos da India.

Que o Sydy fatecan reconhecendo o Seu erro, e em satisfação de todos os q̄ seus Governadores havião cometido na administração de seus Reinos durante a sua menoridade, mandou de gollar os três governadores, e tutores seus por hauerem tomado catiuos os portugueses, destruhidos os seus barcos, e intentado sediciozamente a cometer as terras e os portos do estado da India no tempo que por elle gouernarão.

Que de hoje para todo sempre não poderá nauegar embarcação sua, sem tomar cartaz do estado, nem nauegará o porto com q̄ tenhão grr.^a os portuguezes que em sinal de feudo reconhecid.^{to} e boa amizade pagará ao estado dous cauallos Arabios.

E por quanto hoje se prohibe ao Sedy o Comércio de todos os portos da Arabia que em lugar dos cauallos dará pera prouimento das pracas de sua Magestade, quarenta muras de bate que serám entregues ao feitor de Sua Mag.^{de} de Chaul, e

cobrara delle conhecimento.

Que podera o Sidy ter nesta Cidade seu feitor se lhe for necessário para bem do seu contrato e mercancia, e se lhe passaram quatro cartazes, assy a elle Sidy, como a seus uassalos para nauegarem a quaes quer portos, não sendo de inimigos do estado nem leuando, e trazendo couzas defezas pello regimento, e pagaram somente os direitos que el-Rey Magor, e seus uassalos costumão pagar dos Cartazes que pedem, acem sinal de boa amizade se concede hum Cartaz cada anno a elle sidy, liure de direitos para hum barco de porte de quinhentos até seis centos candis não indo como se declara para portos de inimigos do estado, nem leuando couzas defezas.

Que o S.^{or} Conde V. Rey esquecerá de hoje para todo sempre as mas Correspondencias feitas pellos Capitães daquella fortz.^a aos mercadores, officiaes e Soldados de sua Mag.^{de}

Que em nome de Sua Mag.^{de} o S.^{or} Conde V. Rey toma, e aceita Como feudatr^o deste estado de baixo da sua protecção a elle fatecan, e a todos os Seus Sucessores, para os Socorrer em todos Seus apertos, e necessidades Com as forças do Estado.

Que sem embargo de ser tomado em boa guerra hum barco do Sidy o S.^{or} Conde V. Rey, mandara que or Sinco Caualllos que nelle uierão destinados, de prezente para Sua pessoa, Se lhe dem graciozamente.

Que as fazendas, e tudo o mais que se achou no dito barco ficara perdido p.^a a fazenda Real de sua mag.^{de} e se

repartira Conforme seus regimentos que aos Vassallos do Sidy
que uinhão em barco se lhes dara Liberdade.

Com estas Condições recebe o S.^{or} Conde V. Rey
debaixo da protecção das armas de Sua Mag.^{de} ao dito Sidy,
cem fee do Tratado, se assinarão estas Capitulações pelo
S.^{or} Conde V. Rey, e Sellarão Como Sello das armas Reaes de
Sua Magestade, e outro sy pelo S.^{or} fatecan, com o seu sello
e chapa Costumada. o Conde V. Rey = Sello das armas Reaes de
Portugal = chapa do Sidy de Danda = Registada no Lº dos
Registros que serue nesta feitoria de Chaul, a fls.45 Verso te
46 por my escriuão da dita feitr^a. e fazenda abaixo asinado
Chaul 5 de Mayo de 670 = João Roiz.

Summary

Chaul, 5th May, 1670

The copy of the terms with which the Viceroy, João Nunes da Cunha accepted the Siddi Prince, Fateh Khan as feudatory to the Portuguese State of India. The terms capitulated by Dom Jeronimo Manoel, Admiral of the Royal Navy are as follows:-

That Siddi Fateh Khan confessed the mistakes committed by him and his governors in the administration of his dominions as he had sent his three governors and guardians to behead the Portuguese captives, destroyed their ships and seditiously wished to attack the lands and ports of the Portuguese State during the time they governed for him.

That from today onwards, Siddis embarkations will not navigate without obtaining passport from the State. Nor his

ships will navigate to any port inimical to the Portuguese. The Siddi will also give two Arab horses in recognition of feudality and good friendship.

And while the commerce of all the ports of Arabia is prohibited to the Siddi from today onwards, he will give 40 bags (Muras) of rice to be delivered to the Factor of Chaul in place of the horses.

That the Siddi could have his Factor in that city if necessary for the good of his contract and commerce and will be issued four passports in order to navigate to any port friendly to the Portuguese. He will, however, not carry or bring any defensive material and will pay only the same duties as was being paid by the Mughal King and his vassals for the passports. As a mark of good friendship, the Siddi will be given one passport yearly for a ship that could carry 500-600 khandis weight to friendly ports without having any defensive material.

That the Viceroy in future will forget the past bad correspondence made by the Captain of that fort to the merchants, officials and soldiers of His Majesty.

That on behalf of His Majesty, the Viceroy takes and accepts the Siddi and his successors as feudatories under his protection in order to help him in all their hardships and necessaries with State's forces.

That despite one ship of the Siddi was taken away in old war, the Viceroy will order to return it alongwith five

horses brought by him in that ship.

That the goods and other items found in the said ship will remain the property of the Royal Revenue and in case it is divided as per the regimens, it would be restored to the vassals of Siddi, who came in it.

With these conditions, the Viceroy receives the said Siddi under the protection of Royal Arms.

Signed and sealed by the Siddi
and the Viceroy, Chaul, 5th
May, 1670 (copy in the grand
Livro de Pazes, folios 52-52v)

Monções do Reino N^o 76, 1710-1713, fl.68.

Dom Rodrigo da Costs V. Rey da India Amigo. EV El Rey uos emuió muito Saudar. Hauendo mandado ver o que me escreuestes em carta de 4 de Janeyro deste anno a serca da noticia que tiuestes da Armada que El Rey Mogor intentaua fazer para a qual tinha nomeado por General a hum. Frances, cujo intento se conseguisse tinheis por infaliuel quebrarmos com elle, por ser sem duuida, q̄ o dito General daria grandes motiuos a isso, e que sobre este Negócio havieis escrito a Juliana Diaz da Costa Portugueza, que se acha com grande valimento na assistênciā do do.^{to} Rey e se uos tinha offerecido para sollecitar os negocios desse Estado cuja carta lhe mandartes, por uia do Padre João de Abreu, da Comp.^a de Jesus, a quem o dito Rey estimaua muito. E pareceo me agradeceruos as diligencias que emprendestes para se desuanecer o intento Del Rey Mogor Lançar esta Armada nos mares da India, que certamente seria nosso prejuizo como em impedir actteição do General Frances. E vos emcomendo me deis conta do que tem Resoltado dellas. Escrita em Lx.^a a 29 de 7.^{bro} de 1710.

Rey

Para o V. Rey e Cap.^m g.¹ do Est.^o da India.

Summary

Lisboa, 29th September, 1710

In response to the letter dated 4th January 1710 of the Viceroy Dom Rodrigo da Costa regarding the intention of the Mughal King to raise a fleet under a French General, the Portuguese king writes to him that he (Viceroy) might have already written to Dona Juliana Dias da Costa serving in Mughal Court in this respect in order to dispel the intention of the Mughal King to put that fleet in the Indian waters. He further asks him to let him know the result of his efforts in this regard.

Monções do Reino N.^os 77 E 78, 1711-1713, fl.73.

Nº 10

Snor

Pareceo me conveniente e precizo a minha obrigacão fazer presente a V. Mag.^{de} que El Rey Mogor Se conserua com este Estado, e Vassallos de V. Mag.^{de} não Só com a mesma paz e amizade que Seu Pay teve com Nosco, Mas ainda com Muito Mayores finezas, e Ventages do que elle, e assim corre or nosso Comércio em todos os Seus Portos Liure, e Sem or menor embaraco, tanto assim que ate' a Nosso Respeito absolueo do gouerno de Surrate ao Nababo q Nelle estaua chamado Amanato Can, por Ser a Serrimo inimigo da Nasção Portugueza, de que dou conta a V. Mag.^{de} para q parecendo lhe agradecer ao dito Rey o affecto com que Nos trata o possa fazer Na certeza do muito que delle dependemos; e a Juliana Dias da Costa como Nossa Procuradora, hé toda Sua Valida. Deos g.^{de} e prospere a Real Pessoa de V. Mag.^{de} os felices e ditozos annos q todos Seus Vassallos dezejamos. Goa 3. de Dezembro de 1711.

Summary

Goa, 3rd December, 1711

The Portuguese Viceroy reports to his King that the Mughal King not only maintains the age-old peace with the State and vassals of His Majesty but also supports the State so much that the Portuguese commerce was running freely in all his ports without any hindrance. He adds further that the Mughal King has relieved the Nawab of Surat (Amanat Khan), the biggest enemy of the Portuguese nation, from the government of that city, while Dona Juliana Dias da Costa continues to be there in the Mughal Court.

Reis Vizinhos N^o 8, 1714-1722, fl.28V.

Para Assidan Ale Can Generalissimo dos exercitos del Rey Mogor.

Vasco Fez Cesar de Menezes do Concelho de Estado do
Muito alto,e muito poderoso Rey de Portugal Alcaide Mor de
Alemquer Comendador da ordem de christo, Alferes mor do Reino
V. Rey e Capitão geral do Estado da India.

Ao estimavel e felicissimo Assidan Alican
generalissimo dos exercitos do muito poderoso e Magnifico Rey
Mogor.

Dou os parabens a V. S.^a da Victoria q̄ tem alcançado
Contra o Rebelde que Segamente se opunha a Obedienceado Seu
Rey Soberano, e espero q̄ V. S.^a Continue nas mesmas
felicidades para que Se exalte o Seu nome em toda a parte do
Mundo.

Por Carta de Dona Juliana Dias me Certifico haver o
grande Rey Mogor entregue a V.S.^a a Formão pello qual da a
este Estado as Terras de Ponda Com Ordem para o entregar a
pessoa minha a qual vay a presencia de V. S.^a não só para esse
Efeito mas tbem para Segurar a V. S.^a a minha verdadeira
Amizade a qualquer o Seja Correspondida por parte de V. S.^a
fazendo Com que Se obseruem todas as Prauanas e Formões que o
grande Rey Mogor passou a fauor deste Estado, e porq̄ Conue
muito ao portos, e Vassallos do grande Rey Mogor q̄ o
Leuantado, e Pirata Angria Seja destruido, nam auuido q̄ V.S.^a
Concorra para tudo o q̄ for do agrado de V.S.^a me achara, Com

grande Vontade.

Deos alumie a V. S.^a em Sua Diuina graça. Goa 12 de
Janr^O de 1716. - V. Rey.

Summary

Goa, 12th January 1716

Portuguese Viceroy, Vasco Fernandez de Menezes, congratulates the Mughal General Asidan Ali Khan on his victory over the rebel (Marathas) and informs him of having received a letter from Dona Juliana Dias confirming the delivery of Mughal King's Farman to (him) Khan for passing over the lands of Ponda (Phonda in Goa) to the Portuguese. He expects him to honour the royal order in the interest of existing friendship as the step will be extremely useful for the ports and vassals of the Mughal King in reducing the pirate Angria.

Reis Vizinhos N^o 8, 1714-1722, fl. 98.

Para Sidi Acut Can General da Armada Del Rey Mogor.

Receby com grande gosto a carta de V. S. pois Sempre me deuco huma grande estimacão tudo o que vem de V.S.

Ao Cabo Cazil Janden que V.S. me nomea mandey entregar o produzido dos poucos effeitos que Se puderao Saluar do naufragio do barco de V.S. que deu a costa nas prayas de Bardez e Sempre que as embarcações de V.S. tomarem este porto lhe mandarey Sem duuida fazer a milhor paçagem e o mesmo entregara a V.S. huā pequena proua da minha amizade. D.^s G.^e Alumie a V. S. em Sua Diuina graça Goa 27 de Abril de 1720. Conde Dom Luis de M^{es}.

Summary

Goa, 27th April 1720

Viceroy Dom Luis de Menezes acknowledges the receipt of the letter of Siddi Yakut Khan, Admiral of the Fleet of the Moghul and assures him all cooperation in helping his Head Constable Kazi Janden (Zanodin) in salvaging the ship wrecked off the sea coast of Bardez.

Monções do Reino N° 102-B, 1731-1735, fls.710-710V.

Nº 10

Senhor

Este Estado se conserua por hora em paz com os vezinhos; e tendo me dado cuidado a facilidade com que o Marata Se fez derepente no principio do inuerno, Senhor de muitas fortalezas, e Serras do Sidy, por traiçao de hum principal cabo Seu que lhas entregou, e a dilligênciā que fez para conquistar também as praças maritimas do mesmo Sidy com dous exercitos que lhe aplicou, e muitos mezes as tiuerão atacadas, ultimamente cessou o receo, porque despersuadido o Marata da esperança da Conquista, Sendo o Sidy Socorrido dos Inglezes de Bombaim, a mandando eu a Rogo de hum, e outro partido, que me conuidarão para declararme em Seu fauor, duas fragatas de Guerra ao porto de Danda a mediar entre ambos, encarregando esta Comissao a António Cardim Froes que por muito práctico, e estimado entre aquella gente era o mais proporcionado medianeiro, Retirouse o Marata Sem Conseguir a Conquista, nem ajustar a paz, que era o que nos Conuinha, porque em quanto os vezinhos se occupão com guerra entre sy, Conseruase o Estado liure de o inquietarem, e pode entre tanto preuenirse Com fortificações, e Meyos para não Receyar que os inquietem.

O Rey Canará me pedio o Socorresse com embarcações de guerra, que Comboyassem as Suas de mantimentos para o exercito que tem nas terras já Conquistadas aos Naires, onde uay continuando a guerra contra Cananor, que lhe tem Rezistido vigorozamente, eu assim pella dependência que o

Estado tem do mantimento que Costuma conduzir dos Seus portos, Como para Se facilitar a obra em que actualmente Se trabalha de fortificar em Lugar dominante da barra a Feitoria de V. Mag.^e no porto de Mangalor, lhe tenho assistido com as embarcações pedidas.

O Angria hé o unico vezinho que por mar me da cuidado pello grande embaraco, que faz ao Comércio, tendo augmentado as Suas forças maritimas com a Armada do Sidy que pela traição ja Referida chegou a poder do Marata que lha Cedeo, e achandose assim Com mais de doze Pallas, e trinta, ou quarente galuetas, esta hum grande Corsario, vzano da Ligeireza das Suas embarcações para atacar Sem Risco, e Se Retirar quando o Considera. Tem Significado por uezes querer pass Comigo, mas ao mesmo tempo toma as embarcações de nossos mercadores, e Rezoluendose a escreuerme com expedições de paz, não Receou dizerme que tomaua as duas embarcações por não Leuarem Cartaz Seu, po que lhe respondi como me pareçeo que Convinha, e conheço Ser precizo cuidarze muito em se Conseguir a Sua destruição para o que me parece Ser muito necessaria hua Armada Correspondente a que elle tem mas não há meyos para isto, nem vejo que facilmente os possa hauer neste Estado.

Deos guarde a muito alta, e muito poderoza Pessoa de V. Mag.^e felices annos. Goa 19 de Janeiro de 1734.

Summary

Goa, 19th January, 1734

The Portuguese Viceroy reports to his King that the State maintains peace with the neighbours. But the Marathas, who suddenly raided in the beginning of the winter, have become the lords of many forts and hills of the Siddi on account of the treason of one of his principal captains who delivered them maritime places and two naval detachments. The Marathas attacked many times but finally the fear ceased as the Siddi was helped by the British from Bombay. Adding further, he states that he had sent two warships under the able charge of António Cardim Froes to the port of Danda to mediate between the both and the Marathas retired without achieving the conquest. He also adds that the Angria is a unique neighbour who had greatly embarrassed the State's commerce, having expanded his naval force by adding Siddi's fleet due to the said treason. Adding further, he states that now the great pirate was using his rich ships to attack without any fear and has desired peace with him (Viceroy) while capturing the ships of the Portuguese merchants at the same time for not carrying his permits.

GLOSSARY

Abeixim	- Abyssinian
Amir	- Nobleman
Amrityog	- An auspicious moment for immortality
Azan	- Muslim Priest's call for prayer
Badshah	- King
Bambus Machos	- Bamboo sticks
Bandhis	- A term applied to Hindu Siddi slave
Barco	- A kind of ship
Bhang	- Indian opium
Budavant	- A Siddi headman
Bund	- Revolt
Cafres	- A term applied to the community of African origin in India. It is derived from the Persian language.
Chakram	- A coin used in South India
Chauth	- A kind of tax levied by the Marathas
Chauthi, Chothi	- One fourth part
Chhatrapati	- The title adopted by Shivaji on his coronation
Chhokara	- Bastard
Chinchoree	- A Rupee of Medieval era
Chorvad	- A colony of thieves
Cruzado(s)	- A Portuguese Coin(s)
Dangaree	- A kind of ammunitions
Dargah	- Tomb of holy person or Muslim saint
Deccan	- South India
Deshe	- Pancake
Dharma	- Religion
Diwali	- Hindu Festival of light

Durwesh	- A Muslim Monk
Durg	- Fort
Falgun	- A last month in the Hindu Calendar year falling in March.
Farman	- A Royal order issued by Muslim rulers in India.
Fauzdar	- Commander of an army
Galliot	- A ship
Ghatka	- Moment
Ghat	- Valley
Ghorpad	- A big iguana
Ghurab	- A ship
Guerilla	- Hide and sick warfare
Hanjaman	- Muslim settlement
Jaldurg	- Water fort or sea fort
Jhunjhuna	- Rattle
Kabob	- A dish of meat
Kafrai, Kaphir	- A term applied to the community of African origin in India.
Karbhari	An officer with civil and magisterial powers
Khanqah	- A monastery for Sufi saints
Khazan	- Salty marshland cultivated along the coast
Kshatriya	- Martial race of India
Lascar	- Men employed in army
Lathi	- Wooden stick
Machuwa	- A ship
Masjid	- Mosque
Masnad	- Seat of power
Math	- Hindu Monastery

Medhekot	- Wooden fort
Mehrub	- Moonshaped
Moglai	- A kind of revenue
Moor	- The term applied to Muslim in India
Mulatto	- A descendant of European father and African mother or vice versa.
Muharram	- A Shia Muslim festival
Muhurt	- Auspicious time
Namdari	- Name given to a Hindu Siddi
Navami	- Ninth day of a Hindu month
Nawab	- A title adopted by the Muslim Chieftains of independent principalities.
Panchayat	- A village council
Paisa	- A coin
Palla	- A kind of ship
Pankot	- Water fort
Parangue	- A kind of ship
Pardao	- A Portuguese coin
Pargana	- Sub-division of a district
Parwana	- Royal order issued by a Muslim Prince
Pataxo	- A kind of ship
Patmar	- A kind of ship
Peshwa	- Maratha Prime Minister
Pindari	- A group of armed people comprising Hindu and Muslim soldiers of disbanded armies.
Piro	- Pirgad (Sadashivgad, near Karwar).
Qazi	- Islamic theological Magistrate
Quibla	- Holy Point in Mecca to which Muslims turn for prayer.

Quiledar	- Commander of the fort
Quran	- Holy book of Muslims
Ragi	- A dish of Siddis
Raja	- A Hindu King
Ratti	- A kind of bread
Reis	- A Portuguese coin
Risala	- Battalion
Sahib	- A respectable term applied to nobleman in India
Sanad	- Certificate
Sarkhel	- Maratha title for Admiralsip
Sarnaubat	- Chief Admiral of Maratha navy
Sati	- A Hindu woman who burnt herself alive on the pyre after the death of her husband.
Senapati	- Commander-in-Chief of the army
Sepoy, Sipai	- A soldier
Shibar	- A kind of ship
Shimga Poornima	- A Hindu festival
Sirpaw	- Head-dress bestowed in honour
Shivaratri	- A Hindu festival dedicated to Lord Shiva
Sogat, Saguate	- Gift
Sombreiro	- A Portuguese word for Medieval time umbrella. It is in vogue in Portuguese even now.
Subedar	- Viceroy or Governor of a province
Swami	- A title for Hindu Priest
Swaraj	- Self-government
Turushkas	- Turks
Vajrath Maab	- Vice-Admiral of Maratha navy

- Vedas - Hindus' age-old holy religious texts
- Wakil-i-Mutluq - Advisor to the King or Prime Minister
- Wazir - Viceroy
- Xerafim - A Portuguese coin
- Yugadi - A Hindu festival
- Zamindar - A landlord

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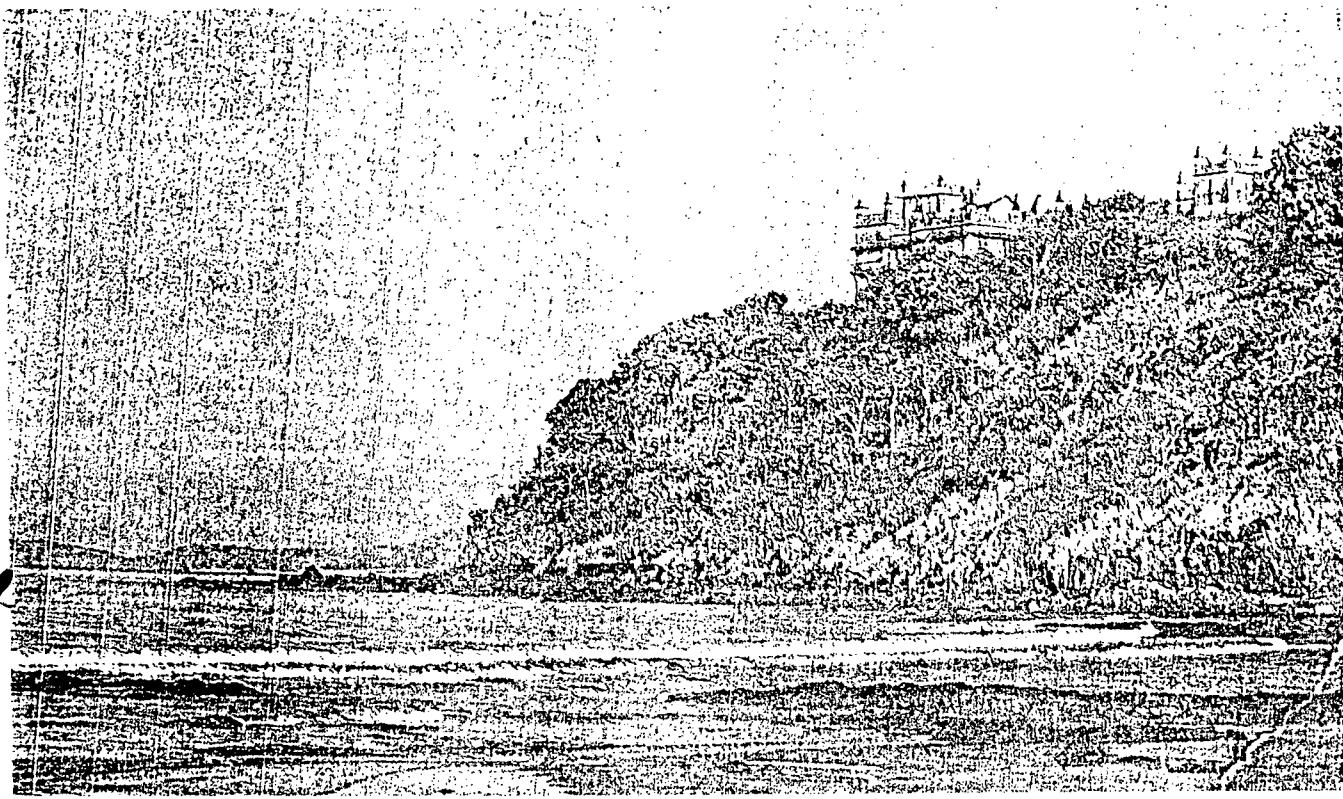
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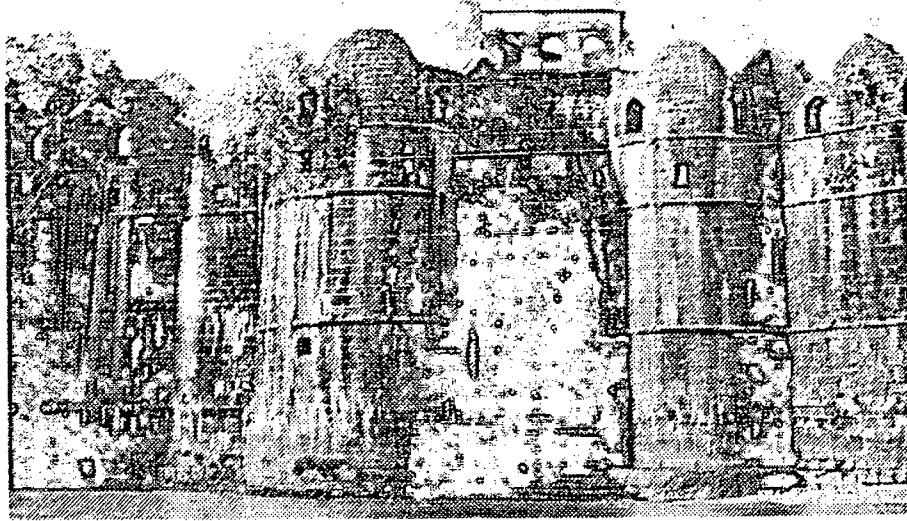
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A scenic view of Murud-Janjira



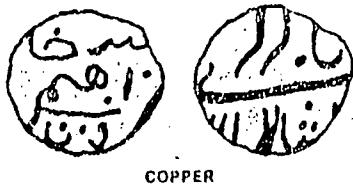
Front view of Janjira fort



Inside view of Janjira fort

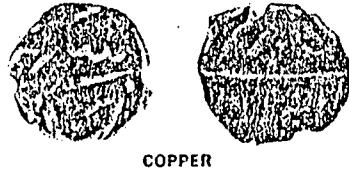
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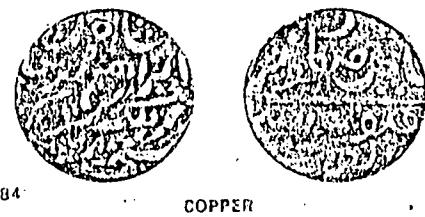
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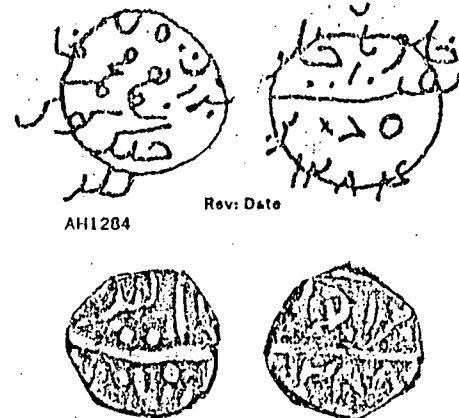
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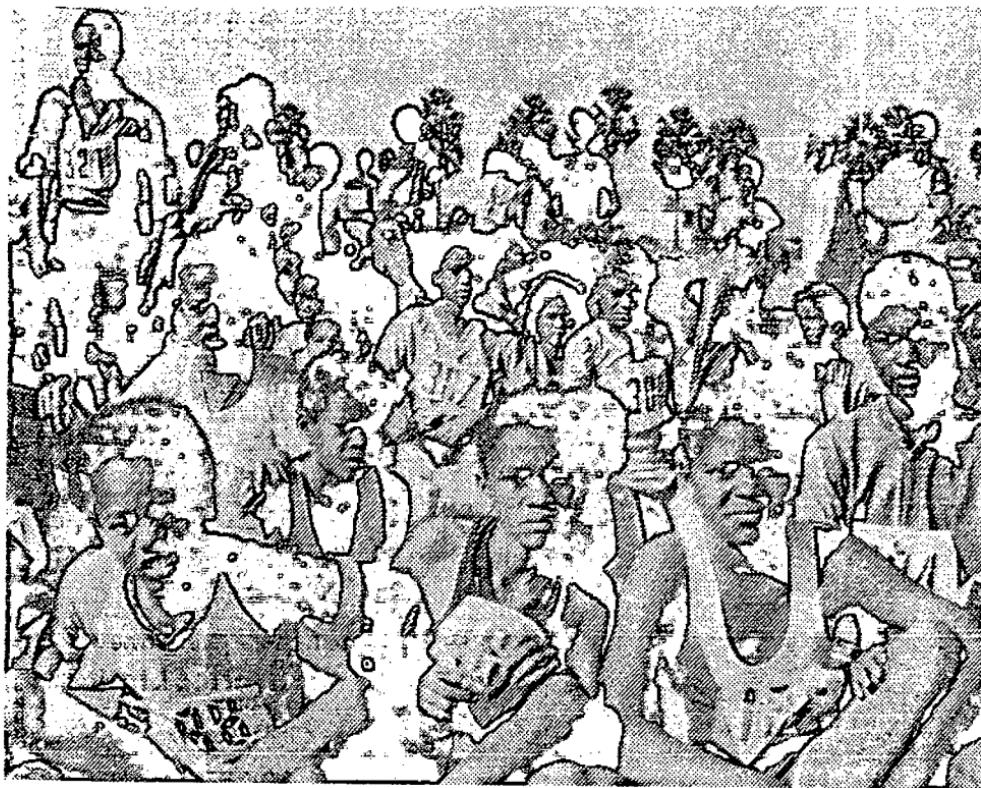
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Coins of the Siddis of Janjira



A Siddi couple



Youngsters of the Siddi tribe in a sports camp
organised by the Sports Authority of India in
Junagarh